

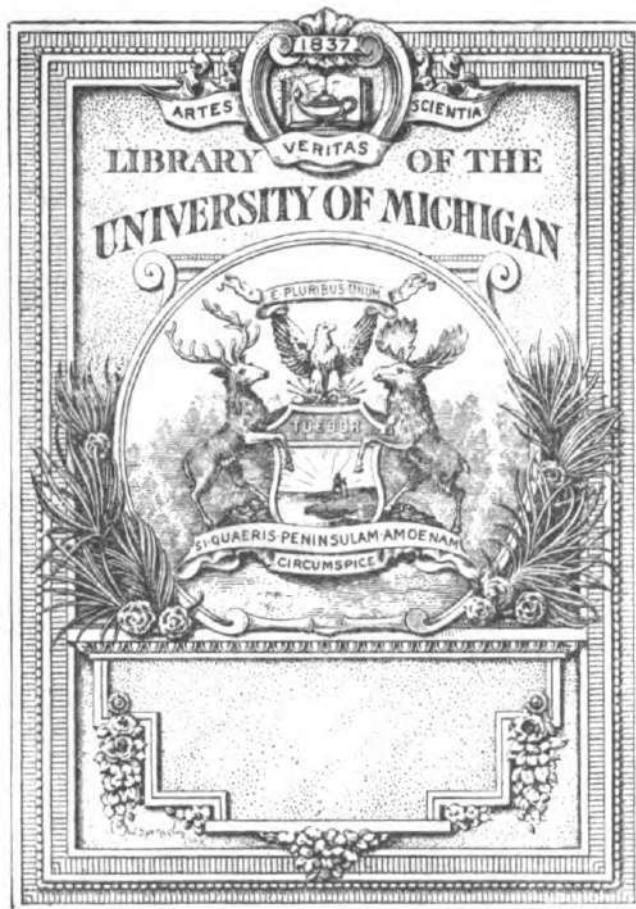
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*Black  
Ivory  
(and)  
White!  
The Story of  
El Zubeir  
Pasha*

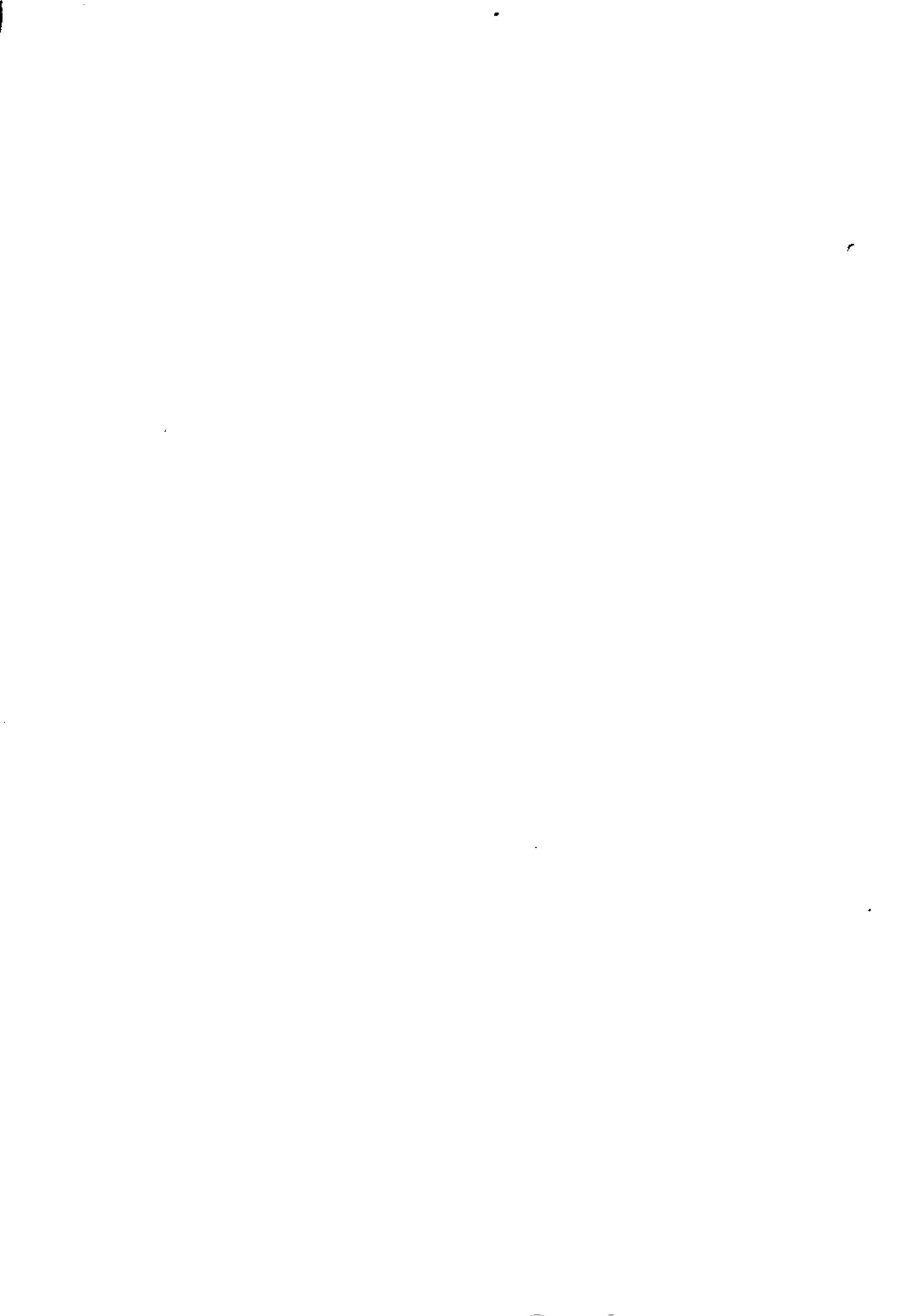
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# BLACK IVORY AND WHITE

OR

## THE STORY OF EL ZUBEIR PASHA SLAVER AND SULTAN AS TOLD BY HIMSELF

TRANSLATED AND PUT ON RECORD BY

H. C. JACKSON

*Sudan Civil Service*

"As for Zebeir, I wish with all my heart he was here. He alone can ride the Sudan horse, and if they do not send him I am sentenced to penal servitude for my life up here."

*General Gordon to Viscount Esher.*

Oxford

B. H. BLACKWELL, BROAD STREET

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## CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTORY . . . . .	I
PREFACE . . . . .	I
CHAPTER 1. . . . .	3
CHAPTER 2. . . . .	26
CHAPTER 3. . . . .	78
CHAPTER 4. . . . .	89
CHAPTER 5. . . . .	96
NOTE A. . . . .	115
NOTE B. . . . .	117

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## INTRODUCTORY.

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A tottering and uxorious old Arab occasionally pays a visit to his house at Omdurman, when he wearies of his husbandry at Geili, or is satiated with the delights and dalliance of Cairo. It is difficult to realise that this hoary veteran of at least eighty winters, this venerable, courteous old gentleman is the hero of a hundred hard-won fights, who conquered, and held, a country that was larger than France.

So far as I know there has never appeared in English an account of this old warrior's achievements, and I have attempted, in what follows, to put on record the story of his life as he recounted it, in the year 1900, to Naoum Bey Shoucair (1). This story I have supplemented, and annotated from other sources, notably that of Nur Bey Angara, and Mohammed Adam, the Omda of Geili, who were with Zubeir in the early days of his triumphs. This account I have made no attempt to trick out with flowery language, or ornaments of speech. It is set forth here, exactly as it fell from his lips: the plain straight forward story of a plain fighting man. In this way, perhaps, it may be easier to realise the simple directness of the man.

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(1) *Tarikh el Sudan.*

For the veracity of some of the tales that follow I do not vouch, and it must be born in mind that, historically considered, the motives assigned by Zubeir for various events are to be received with considerable suspicion. At the same time the facts of his life as he recounted them may be taken to be substantially correct, for his story as he told it to me later, leaning back on his Divan, while his trembling fingers feebly engaged in a futile endeavour to extract some evil smelling snuff from his multi-coloured snuff-box, differed but little from that which he had recounted to Naoum Bey Shoucair some twelve years before.

But this story, be it remembered, was the one that he wished to be put on everlasting record of his life and actions. In it he made no mention of the slave-raiding that formed the basis of his power, and the steppingstone to his later greatness. With this question of slavery I hope to deal in a later publication. For the present it may be sufficient to remark that it has been the custom to lay undue stress on this side of his character. The public estimate of Zubeir has been far too much coloured by the fulminations of the Anti-Slavery Society, which chose to regard him as the personification of the vices of all the slave-drivers.

Nor have I done more than touch upon the much debated point of the advisability, or otherwise, of sending Zubeir, at General Gordon's request, to rule over the Sudan. It would be mere presump-

tion on my part to attempt to deal with a question that has been treated in so masterly a fashion by him who was of all others most qualified to form an opinion on the subject (1).

All that I have essayed to do is to put on record in English the strange adventures of a unique personality, whose fame, perhaps, is not so well known as it deserves to be, except among the cultured few in England who interest themselves in African affairs, or the uncultured many in the Southern Sudan by whom the name of Zubeir is still remembered with awe and veneration.

My sincere thanks are due to Lieut. General Sir F. R. Wingate G.C.V.O. K.C.B., K.C.M.G., D.S.O., etc., and to Major General Sir Rudolf von Slatin G.C.V.O., K.C.M.G., C.B., etc. for much valuable assistance ; to Naoum Bey Shoucair for very kindly allowing me to borrow wholesale from his "History of the Sudan", as well as to Elia Effendi Atiya and Mohammed Bey Said, who devoted a great deal of their time to helping me with the translation.

Finally, from those who find in what follows a haphazard method of treatment, a slovenliness of phrase, or incorrectness of diction I ask pardon. With the thermometer standing at 108° in the shade it is no easy matter, in the moments snatched from a slumberous afternoon, to pay that strict attention to detail that dwellers in a more temperate clime seem to have the right to claim.

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(1) See Lord Cromer, Modern Egypt Vol. 1. ch. 25.

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Sudan Civil Service.

## PREFACE.

Some apology is due not only for the publication of the following monograph on the life of El Zubeir but also for the form it takes. I commenced writing the account of El Zubeir's adventures when first he came to Omdurman, hoping to see its completion before his years became too many for him to bear. His bodily feebleness has, however, rapidly increased during the past few months and, after delineating the outlines of his picture, I am perforce compelled by his frequent indispositions to postpone the filling in of the details to a season that may never now come. Latterly his illness has taken a turn for the worse and I have decided to publish what I have already finished although my notes are still incomplete and much that he has already told me lies upon my table in a more amorphous state than what follows. Historically considered the account that Zubeir himself gives of his life and actions is of little value. I hope, however, to be able to test it in days to come with the touchstone of facts.

H. C. J.

Omdurman. 1. 5. 1913.



## CHAPTER I.

### THE MERCHANT.

“In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

**Origin and Family.** I am Zubeir, son of Rahmat, son of Mansûr, son of Ali, son of Mohammed, son of Suliman, son of Na-am, son of Suliman, son of Bakr, son of Shahîn, son of Gumiâ son of Gamâa, son of Ghanim el Abbassi. My ancestors, the Abbassides, fled from Baghdad in the year 1278 A. D. after the attack on them of the Tartars. They came to Egypt where they found the Fatimites in possession and, as they could not tolerate their rule, they departed for the Sudan where some settled on the White Nile, while others made their way to Dar Fûr and Wadai. Among the many families that were scattered along the Nile was that from which is descended the well known tribe of Gumiab, who trace their origin to an ancestor Gumiab. These people established themselves on the main Nile between Jebel Gerri and Jebel el Sheikh el Tayib, and became famous throughout the Sudan for their bravery and their devotion to hearth and home. When Ismail Pasha, in 1820, conquered the Sudan, our chiefs gave him a hearty

welcome and came to terms with him. Among these chiefs was my father Rahmat and his brother El Fil who respected the treaty until the day of their death, and we too have followed in their footsteps in loyal obedience up to the present time.

I was born on the Island of Wawissi on the seventeenth of Moharram 1246, that is 1831 of the Christian era, \* and I grew up under the eye of my father until my seventh birthday, when he sent me to the Khartoum school. Here I learned to read and to write, and was instructed in the Koran as interpreted by Ali Omar and El Basri. I was also taught metaphysics after the school of the Imam Malik. When I was twenty five years old I took as my wife the daughter of my uncle and became a merchant.

### **JOURNEY TO THE BAHR-EL-GHAZAL, 1856.**

“There was a well known merchant of Nagaa Hamada in Lower Egypt, called Ali Abu Amûri, who was one of the most important traders in the Bahr el Ghazal. With him my cousin Mohammed Abd el Qâdir purposed to travel secretly : but when I heard of the journey that he contemplated, my heart was filled with compassion and sorrow, seeing

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\* Popular tradition makes him much older than 81 years of age.

that the Bahr el Ghazal is a far distant country teeming with dangers. And so I determined to join him and did indeed overtake him at the village of Wad Shallai, on the White Nile, one day's journey from Khartoum. I tried to dissuade him from continuing his voyage unless he first returned to Khartoum, but he refused to go back until he had completed his undertaking. Then was my heart vexed sorely at his refusal, and I swore to him by divorce that, if he would not return to Khartoum then would I go with him. This solemn oath I took, thinking that he would not accept my sacrifice and would be forced to return. But he insisted on continuing his journey, so, in order to fulfil my oath, I joined him in the service of Ali Amûri, and we left Wad Shallai on the 14th day of September 1856.

I fly to God — Whose name be exalted — for protection from that journey, from which I expected naught except evil and danger. But it fell out better than I had anticipated, insomuch as it was the cause of all my progress and fame. Through it I reached such a pinnacle of renown as none in the Sudan has ever before me attained to, nor is it likely to be reached by any that come after. "Verily, indeed, you may hate something that may prove to be good for you."

But, sooth to say, I did not attain to this

greatness save after sore tribulation and fatigues, and such labours and hardships as would whiten a young man's hair. For, when first I joined myself to Ali Amûri I was in such poor circumstances that he treated me as a man of spirit would treat a dog. He gave me neither cakes of fine bread, nor coffee nor sweetmeats ; naught save such mean fare as sufficed to keep my body and soul united. In very truth I was in an abject state and reckoned of little worth among the sons of Adam. Moreover, he and my cousin would ever cajole me with glozing words : so that, whereas he told me at first that we were to proceed no further than Mahhu Bey tree, ere we should furl our sails and recite the evening prayers, we ceased not to prosecute our journey until we had arrived at Wad Shallai. In this unworthy state I continued on my way, until the trees and woods that fringe the waters of the White Nile gave way before the limitless morasses of the Bahr el Ghazal. Here Amûri distributed arms amongst his followers, save that to me only he gave no gun nor munitions of war. But so importunate was I that I ceased not to clamour for a gun, until at length he repented him of his churlishness and gave me an old and worn out rifle. This however I mended, whereat he marvelled exceedingly.

Then came a day when the people of the country conspired against us, and we were compelled to have recourse to arms. Our troops were divided into two parts of a hundred men each. The

savages then attacked us with hordes numberless as the flies that assemble on a dead bullock, and we were swiftly engaged in a hand to hand conflict. We were upon the edge of destruction, and the jaws of death gaped open for us, so that we made sure of annihilation. Preeminent amongst the enemy was one who resembled an elephant in bulk, whose ugly visage would put to shame a warthog's self. Him I saw a giant among his fellows sending to an untimely end many of the true believers. With a blow between the eyes I brought him to the ground, and, seizing a loaded rifle that lay beside him, I maintained a desperate fight for the space of an hour, and while I thus busied myself in the fray no less than eleven of the enemy fell victims to my prowess. I was then summoned to the aid of the second party who were sorely pressed, but, after killing other four, I drove the enemy off and we built a zeriba in which to pass the night. Then Amûri brought me cakes out of a bag and exquisite viands, and dainties to which I had long been unaccustomed: he kissed my knees and my head, and ceased not to abase himself before me for a length of time, saying that I had been the cause of their deliverance from the lips of death.

We did not cease to journey for a length of time on the White Nile, until we arrived at the Port of the Bahr el Ghazal. This Port is called Meshra el Rek and beyond it vessels cannot proceed to the south. We disembarked with our bales and our

merchandise on the second of Safar of the same year. Then we passed through the country of the Gangiya, until we arrived on the seventh of the month at the land of the Jûr, where Ali Amûri had a station called Ashur, named after the Sheikh of the District. Now at this time there were in the Bahr el Ghazal many merchants, besides Ali Amûri, scattered throughout the country, each one with a zeriba\* to which he could fly for shelter and into which he could put his goods. Those most in demand were beads of all sorts and colours, cowries, and tin. These are the ornaments for the men and women, and these the inhabitants preferred to silver and gold, exchanging them for ivory, rhinoceros horns, ostrich feathers, rubber, iron, copper, and other products of the country.

### QUELLING OF A LOCAL REBELLION IN 1857.

“I continued to live with my friend Ali Amûri assisting him in his commerce. But there had passed but a few months when the natives rose against the merchants, envying them, their possessions. At length, in the year 1857, they collected from all directions and stormed the zeribas, killing some of the merchants and carrying off their goods as trophies. They also attacked the zeriba of Ali

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\* An enclosure surrounded with a thorn hedge.

Amûri, but I led his men and opened fire on the savages, routing them and killing large numbers : Praise be to God, the High, the Mighty. When the merchants heard of my success they flocked round, and I became in high estimation with them, so that the natives of the country were afraid and did not dare to renew their attack. My friend Ali Amûri, seeing that I was the cause of his escape, loved me exceedingly and gave me a share in his profits, to wit one tenth of all his ivory. When the country was tranquil again, he left me in his camp and went to Khartoum, where he was absent for six months, returning with more merchandise. On his arrival he found that I had amassed such abundance of goods from the products of the country, as he would not have been able to accumulate in many years. This increased his respect for me and he offered me a partnership in his traffic. But my soul inclined to travel and I determined to commence trading by myself.

#### **JOURNEY TO KHARTOUM AND RETURN TO THE COUNTRY OF GOLO 1858.**

“ Then we set sail upon the Bahr el Arab, and we ceased not to pursue our journey until we arrived at the place where its waters unite with those of the Bahr el Ghazal river. And while we thus continued on our way, pondering upon the manifold manifes-

tations of the handiwork of God—to whom be ascribed all power and glory—we looked from the boat and lo ! near at hand we espied a herd of elephants, the tusks of which great beasts would ever excite the envy of the beholder. We moored the boat with intent to shoot them, and set foot upon the land ; but, as it chanced, twixt us and the herd there lay a large and deep morass that had not been visible to the eye. After much tribulation and searching of heart we succeeded in crossing the intervening marsh, but by this time the sun was westering to its setting and the time for hunting already passed. There-upon we began to collect some boughs of trees in order to make some rude kind of shelter from the cold, inasmuch as we had but little in the way of clothes, with which we might prevent the damp mists of evening. Then with one called Mohammed, I went in search of game, carrying with me the gun that Petherick had given me : our three companions, of whom one was called Abdalla Magnun, were left behind in their places. Now it was our custom when engaged in the chase, that should either of the hunters sight an animal, he would recline slowly backwards until he had assumed a sitting posture. We had proceeded on our way but a short distance, when I beheld a crocodile of gigantic bulk and fearsome aspect, some eight paces distant from the water. I plucked my companion's garment and very gradually sat down. Then I took careful aim and was about to

shoot the beast, when amazement and dismay got hold upon us, for close at hand was a lion stealthily stalking the crocodile. We diverted ourselves with this strange sight for a length of time, when suddenly the lion sprang and seized the unclean brute by the neck; the crocodile writhed and lashed furiously with its tail and then lay dead upon the ground. At this spectacle our wonderment increased, and we called upon God to guard us from all evil. Then my companion wished to shoot the lion, but I forbade him, saying, that, as he could not himself slay a crocodile by biting it in the neck, so I would shoot the man who destroyed the creature that could. We then approached the crocodile of which the bulk was so vast that, when I bestrode it, my feet but scarcely touched the ground. We took its musk and, as the shades of evening where now lengthening into night, we stayed where we were at no great distance from the crocodile, intending to renew the chase on the following day. But ever through the dark watches of the night there moved and mouthed the prowling lions which had collected to devour the dead brute : sleep was far from our eyes by reason of the disturbance that they created, now wailing, now growling, or again challenging the very skies with their awe-inspiring roars. With the first streak of early dawn the noises were hushed, and we plucked up courage to see what had befallen during the night. And when we had drawn near the crocodile,

we found that three parts of it had been eaten by the lions whose roaring had kept us awake. So we returned to our companions, who were filled with amazement when we had informed them of all that we had seen, and of the perilous adventures we had undergone.

Then we ceased not on our journey until we arrived at Khartoum which we reached on the 15th of October 1858, with about £E. 1000 as my share of the profits earned from my commerce. With this I bought a boat and much merchandise, and collected a large following, as is the way with merchants. These I armed with rifles and we embarked with our goods for Meshra el Rek. But fate decreed that we should not reach our destination save after toil and tribulation, for, in our absence, a great bar of the "mother of wool" (†) had formed across the waters of the river, so that our strength availed not to remove it. The days came and went while we

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† By the banks of the Bahr el Ghazal and the Bahr el Arab grow papyrus and a reed known to the Arabs under the name of Um Suf. Mother of wool. These plants become detached by the high winds that blow during the season of the rains and are driven along the narrow and meandering channels until their progress is barred by a bend in the river. Their roots then strike down into the muddy bottom and speedily taken a firm hold so that the whole channel may be blocked for many miles by these plants and other floating masses of a like nature. It is no uncommon experience for boats to be detained by these great barriers. In fact, in the year 1880, Gessi's steamer was blocked by this sudd, as it is called, and no less than 450 of his men were starved to death before he was himself rescued. For a fuller description of the Sudd, See Gleichen. Anglo-Egyptian Sudan 1.300.

laboured at the task and we despaired of salvation. In the end, after many searchings of heart, we found a man of the Nuer tribe who knew the secret of the waters, and he removed the barrier. We questioned him concerning the matter, and he informed us that it was custom of his tribe to tie the floating weeds together, in order that the cattle might cross from one side of the river to the other. Furthermore, when the season of summer arrived and the waters of the rivers dried in their beds, the natives were wont to drive their cattle to the river's bank in order to graze and drink. But the merchants, as they came and went to barter their goods, would shoot the animals as they drank of the river and steal the flesh. So it was that, to prevent the merchants from destroying their cattle, the savages increased the size of the barrier. Then we continued on our way until we arrived at Meshra el Rek, where I hired some blacks as porters and started by land in the Bahr el Ghazal, my desire being to explore new country that had never previously been visited by merchants. Wherefore I ceased not to pass through the country of Jankât and the Jûrs and El Bangû, until I came to the land of Gôlo, over which was set one Kuwâki. I was treated by him with great honour and hospitality, and I traded in the country until I had accumulated a great abundance of ivory, ostrich feathers, and other of the more valuable products of those parts. These I sent

to Khartoum with my cousin Mohammed Abd el Rahmân, who sold them and returned with more merchandise on the fourteenth of October 1859. Praise be to God the Omnipotent, the Creator of land and sea.

**JOURNEY TO THE NYAM-NYAM\*  
COUNTRY 1859.**

“While I was in the land of Gôlo, I learnt that there was a vast tract of country to the southwest that abounded in buffalo and elephants, which were so many in number that ivory was reckoned of little worth. The Sultan was said to be a just ruler named Tikma, so I packed up my bales and went forth a twenty-five days’ journey to the Sultan of the Nyam-Nyams, taking a sumptuous present with me. Now when first we arrived at Dar Tikma, we were amazed to find that his compound was surrounded with a palisade of elephants’ tusks, some three or four thousand in number. So we asked permission from the Sultan to trade in his country, and were given leave to do so in the land of the cannibals, the land where there are no graves. But he understood not how it was that we set such store by ivory, and we told him that it was simply in order to convert it into powder : so it

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\* A generic and onomatopoetic name applied to the cannibal tribes in that part of the Sudan.

was that, when we returned the following year, we found that the Nyam-Nyams had burnt all the tusks, for as much as the Sultan thought that we were desirous of cheating him. While we continued at Dar Tikma, we all lived in a compound near that of the Sultan. This was of an enormous size, and there lived in it some of his wives\* in a kind of semi-circle round an open space in the centre. One night, it chanced that one of our donkeys escaped, and made its way into the compound of the Sultan, where it began to eat the heads of some Indian corn that had been left unconsumed by the people from the evening before. Now it happened that the Nyam-Nyams had never before seen a donkey, a camel, or a horse, and when the women espied this strange creature they were moved to excitement, thinking it to be a man of exceptionally fine physique: so too thought the Sultan, who was so enraged that he ordered the animal to be killed. He then had the nogâra, or war drum, sounded, and called out all his warriors to fight against us. So I sent Nur Angara with a present of two rifles and forty rounds of ammunition, but Tikma turned his back on him; and when he again tried to greet him face to face, he once more turned his back to mark his displeasure. Nur Angara then said, "Why are you angry, Oh

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† He is said to have had 4,000 wives in all.

Sultan, when you know that it is I who have so often shot monkeys and other delicacies for your feast?" The Sultan replied, "Have I not reason when you send a man by night to enter the quarters of my wives?" But he assured him that the ass was no man, but merely such another animal as an eland or a buffalo, and finally the Sultan was pacified with a gift of six rifles. Now the king had four hundred wives and four hundred sons and daughters, the eldest of whom he gave me in marriage. She was named Ranbu, and her lips were sweeter than honey and her face was like the full moon at its rising. My marriage with her exalted me in the eyes of the people of that country, so that my trade increased and I quickly collected a large store of ivory, rhinoceros horn, and other things.

Now the Nyam-Nyams are notorious cannibals, and the different cannibal tribes can be distinguished by the several ways in which they conduct their feasts: some, for instance, eat only those whom they capture in war: in other cases, where a member of the family is ill or advanced in years, the relatives cut him up that thus they may save him the trouble of a lingering death. The head Sultan of the Nyam-Nyams only eats virgins and youths who have not arrived at puberty. They have long bamboo stakes, on which, after a meal, they fix the jaws of those whom they have consumed, and then boast to their friends of the number that they have consumed, which may amount in certain cases to three or four

hundred : so that a man's spirit is judged by the number of jaw bones that he can display.

We too were wont to profit by the devouring of a victim, inasmuch as the cannibals place the man they purposed to eat upon a pile of wood which they then set on fire, and we used to put our corn upon the wood and underneath the body, so that the corn might be nicely roasted. The cannibals did not eat the nails of their victims, but removed them as we remove the talons of a chicken.

When the Sultan dies, his sons dig a large pit and place in it his Makunga, or hooked sword, his long pipe, shield, and his best loved wife, who has her hands and feet broken. A little fire is then placed in the hole, which is next filled in by the sons. When this has been finished, each of the sons rushes back to the Sultan's compound, when he sticks his spears into some special house, the girl inside becoming his bride unless she chance to be his own mother.\*

## **SECOND RETURN TO KHARTOUM AND WANDERINGS ON THE JOURNEY, 1863.**

Now when the eighteenth day of March, in the year 1863, was already come I obtained permission from the Sultan Tikma to depart. So I left with my goods for Khartoum, and I ceased not in

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\*Not altogether unlike the custom of the Bedaiat tribe described by Slatin Pasha p. 38.

my course until I fell in with my friend Ali Amûri and found him also in mind to return to Khartoum. Whereupon we agreed to travel in company. The zeriba of Ashur was near the River Bangu, one of the branches of the Bahr el Ghazal River, which none of our people had ever before traversed: so we proposed to navigate it, that thus we might save ourselves the labour of carrying the merchandise and bales by land. We built two boats and embarked in them our goods and porters to the number of two hundred and fourteen, and set out for Meshra el Rek with food sufficient for two months. We progressed for thirteen days and nights when the stream widened out, until it resembled a lake rather than a river, and so we deviated from our way. In this lake we wandered for five and seventy days, without seeing aught but sky and sea, even though we searched with a scrutinising eye the waters far and near; then indeed did our stores become exhausted, and we ate what we had of skins and leather thongs, being reduced to sore straits through hunger. For, verily, God abaseth whom He willeth, while there be some whom He exalteth. While we were in this sad condition lo! there appeared some smoke afar off. So Amûri and I selected nine of our men, and we embarked in a small skiff making for the direction of the smoke, but we had not gone but a short distance from the boats when the smoke ceased. Then the boats drew away from us, and we wandered aimlessly at

random, suffering so much from the violence of our hunger that verily we were on the brink of destruction. But that which God willeth cometh to pass, and there is no power nor help but in Him, the High, the Mighty. In the end we saw afar off a tree on a mound, in the middle of the waters, and beneath it we found a large crocodile. This we shot and ate, and recovered some of our strength. Then we turned to go towards the boats, which we reached after an absence of four days. While we had been away lo ! we found that eighteen men had died of hunger, and, when the others had heard of our failure, straightway another died also. The rest, however, positively asseverated that they had seen the smoke every day towards evening. I therefore meditated in my mind awhile, and concluded that there must be land nigh at hand, so I selected twelve of the strongest of our men and put them in a small boat. For the second time we pulled in the direction of the smoke, and there passed but a few hours when we reached a large island containing many people, with cows that could not be numbered. We landed upon the island, and found that the smoke was the smoke of cowdung, which the natives burned every evening in order that they might use the ashes for a bed. There was living in this island a tribe of the Nuers, whose King was named Kureim. Then we landed upon the island, and the people crowded round us, marvelling at our clothes and appearance, and they

questioned us respecting our state, at the same time meaning to take us by treachery. They asked us whence we had come, from heaven or earth or water, and what was our purpose in landing upon the island. By chance I had with me a translator who knew their ruler and the language of the tribe, so I said that I was acquainted with their king Kureim, and wished to be led before him. When they saw that I knew their tongue and their Sultan they were heartily pleased, and told me that my life and that of my men was safe. They slaughtered a cow in hospitable wise and we fell to eating it. But, sooth to say, some of our associates did eat so ravenously, and their satiety became so abundant, that they died in a few minutes. Then I bought eight cows and, after slaughtering them, I sent them piecemeal in the skiff to the rest of my companions that remained behind in the boats. Then they did eat and ceased not to proceed upon their way until they reached the island. Upon this I went to see the King Kureim, and, when I came into his presence, I saluted him, receiving in return his salutations. He questioned me concerning my state, and the reasons which brought me to this island, and I gave him answer to all his enquiries, and related to him all that had befallen from first to last. But when the news of us had spread in the island the grandees began to come in great

numbers to the king, seeking our death, and requesting that our goods should be taken from us. At first he hesitated, but at length gave them permission: but, after we had left his house, we understood what they had in mind, and slept with someone to keep watch throughout the night. My lot fell to be on guard during the first watch of the night, and in it I saw a lion approaching from some distance off; with my rifle I knocked him over upon the ground, where he lay writhing in a pool of blood. The King Kureim was startled from his sleep by the sound of the gunshot, thinking that his men had attacked us: many too of the inhabitants were awakened, but when they saw the lion slain they rejoiced with an exceeding great joy, inasmuch as the lion had been as a second king over them, devouring whomsoever he chanced to meet, until none would dare to leave his house by night. As for the King Kureim his joy was so great at the slaying of the lion that he betrothed one of his daughters to me, and urged me to remain upon the island. So I stopped there for a space of thirty days and thirty nights, until I had bought all that I needed in the way of food. Then we departed by stealth, leaving the island in the two boats. But verily we had not gone but a little distance from the island when we once more lost our way in that lake: nor did we cease to wander astray, until our stores had become exhausted, and there had died all who

were in the boats save Ali Amûri and six others. To God we belong and unto Him shall we return. In very truth we were on the edge of destruction when there appeared afar off a boat. We fired a shot into the air, and the boat came to meet us, and lo ! it was that of Abd el Rahman Abu Garûn,\* a merchant from the Bahr el Ghazal. When he saw us, and in what circumstances we were, he wept aloud, and gave us what was necessary of meat and clothes. We were then five days' journey from Meshra el Rek, to which place we retraced our steps, arriving on the nineteenth of July 1863. The people quickly crowded round, congratulating us on our safe return, and condoling with us for what we had lost of merchandise and men. Once more we embarked in our boats for Khartoum, which we reached on the eleventh of September 1863. Here I remained for a space of time, occupying myself with delights and pleasures, and I forgot the sorrows and distresses that I had endured, by reason of the abundance of my gains. Then I bought such goods as were suitable for commerce, as well as guns and ammunition, and an increased number of followers.

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\* The name signifies "the father of horned cattle" and was given to Abd el Rahman in honour of his courage and enterprise. He was the first traveller to the Nyam-Nyams, and accompanied Petherick in his endeavours to penetrate the Bongo country. In 1866 he was repulsed by the Monbuttoo who were led by Nalengbe, the daughter of the King Tikkiboh, and was finally killed in 1870, in an engagement with the Nyam-Nyams not far from the residence of N'doruma.

## RETURN TO THE COUNTRY OF THE NYAM-NYAMS. 1864.

On the twenty ninth of April I departed from Khartoum, with intent to journey to the land of the Nyam-Nyams. And we ceased not upon our way until we met, near the village of Shol (1), a European lady, who may have been an Austrian or a French woman. She was beautiful as the moon in Ramadan, or as the fruit of the mango tree, and was rich beyond telling (2). She went by the name of Senhora and, when first we saw her, she was killing fowls and plucking out their feathers; at which we wondered greatly. She had with her a hundred and fifty soldiers armed with rifles: and as we had just killed eleven elephants we persuaded her to exchange the arms for them. Here we continued for a length of days, and she desired

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(1) A wealthy Dinka woman, who is thus described by Schweinfurth. "My pen fails in any attempt to depict her repulsiveness. Her naked negro skin was leathery, coarse, wrinkled; her figure was tottering and knock-kneed, she was utterly toothless, her meagre hair hung in greasy locks, round her loins she had a greasy slip of sheepskin, the border of which was tricked out with white beads and iron rings; on her waist and ankles she had almost an arsenal of metal, links of iron, brass and copper, strong enough to detain a prisoner in his cell, about her neck were hanging chains of iron, strips of leather, strings of wooden balls, and heaven knows what lumber more." See Schw. 1. 38., 41, etc.

(2) This must have been Miss Tinné, although Nur Angara denies it. See Schw. 2. 200. Brown, the Story of Africa 2. 110, and Miss Tinné, Travels in the region of the White Nile, etc.

us to procure her a hippopotamus. Nur Angara and a man called Rabeḥ, accordingly, shot one for her, as the men she had with her knew not how to handle a rifle with accuracy and precision. While we were at the village of Shōl one of the Senhora's maids and her dog died; she caused them to be embalmed and put in a box; then she despatched them to Khartoum, whither she shortly afterwards directed her steps.

We reached the land of the Nyam-Nyams early on the twenty fifth of July 1864. I presented a handsome gift to the King Tikma of a soup basin decorated with a device of gold: so pleased was he with the present that he would place it upon his head, and use it as a crown on state occasions: in return he made a great repast for us, killing a hundred of the fattest dogs that were being prepared for his own personal use. I then repaired to the house of my wife Ranbu, and commenced to buy and sell. In this country it was the custom to expose for sale in the markets all those criminals who had committed such offences as theft and adultery. These are then slaughtered like goats and sold for food. I redeemed all such men as I could find who would be able to carry arms, until I had a force of five hundred men, whom I armed with firearms, teaching them how to make use of them. But the Sultan Tikma was afraid of me, because of my power, and consulted his priests who

voted my death. But my wife Ranbu informed me of it secretly and I determined to leave the country of her father.

### DEPARTURE FOR THE COUNTRY OF THE KING DUWEIYU, 1864.

Pondering much on this matter I tried to appease the King Tikma, and said : "There has reached me news that in the land of King Duweiyu is much store of ivory : I desire to go there with my followers". Then the King made reply: "Do thou go thyself but leave thy troop behind". But I answered, "I hear that in this land is no law nor order, and I fear the people lest, if they see my weakness, they may act treacherously towards me and slay me". When the King saw my fixed resolve to go he outwardly gave me permission to depart, but secretly he urged his army to be ready to fall upon me unawares upon the road. When I had left the country his troops tried to take me in an ambush, but I opened a hot fire upon them and, routing them, proceeded on my way to the land of the King Duweiyu, who was an enemy of the Nyam-Nyam Sultan. When he heard of what had befallen me in his country he came out a distance of four hours from his capital in order to greet me. He made me to live near him, treating me with great hospitality, and causing to be built for me a strong square fortress of wood. He supplied me

too with grain and food sufficient for my followers for many days. As for the King Tikma he did not delay long before he despatched under his uncle Marbu a large force, which spread consternation throughout the land of King Duweiyu. In truth the King and his troops were inspired with so great a terror that they fled away secretly under cover of darkness.

There is no God but God and Mohammed is His prophet.

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## CHAPTER 2.

### THE KING.

#### **The Merchant Becomes King. 1865.**

When dawn broke, I saw what had befallen the king Duweiyu, and fear overcame me so that my reason departed from me. Then I began to consider the way of escape; and, while I was in such circumstances, lo ! there came to me a messenger from king Tikma, saying that, on account of my marriage with his daughter and of the previous friendship that had subsisted between us, the king refrained from attacking me, but desired me to retire from the country of Duweiyu, which had now passed beneath his sway. Furthermore, he promised me that he would allow me to go wheresoever I wished, and that I should be in no danger from

him. I agreed to his terms and went out to the country of Gôlo, which I reached on the twenty seventh of May 1865. Here lived the king Addu Shakko, who had treacherously taken my brother Mansûr and killed him, together with the men whom I had sent to trade in his country, depriving them of all their wealth. He doubted not but that I had come to take vengeance for my brother, wherefore he did not allow me to stay in his dominions but threatened me with war. I endeavoured to pacify him with gifts, and assured him that I had nothing in mind except the affairs of commerce, but he refused my gifts and insisted on my leaving his country with all speed. It was the winter-quarter when all the land was under water, so I asked him to bear with me and allow me to remain, until the rainy season should be over and the roads were once more fit for traffic. However he would not listen to my request, and I determined not to quit the place until I should have done battle with him.

With this in mind I made a fortress that covered an expanse of three feddans, † encircling it with a stockade built of interlacing trees so strong and large that shot could not break them down. At this we laboured for three days and three nights, until we had naught to fear at the hands of the

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†Approximately three acres.

enemy. But Shakko pondered in his heart, saying, "Verily these sons of dogs devise some stratagem or artifice in their heads, for do I not see them erecting a fortification against myself ?" And he sent to enquire, "How is it that I see you building a stockade and making preparations against me ?" But I answered him with specious arguments, and replied, "Fear not O King ! for this stockade that we are making is not for purposes of war, but its building has been forced upon us by reason of the leopards that ever prowl around our encampment, and leave neither ourselves nor our goats in peace". So Shakko was appeased and sent messengers to induce us to depart from his territory, but I answered him that we were unable to do so until the rivers should dry in their beds, and the corn should become ripe in the ear. Then the Sultan knew in his heart that we would not go out from his land, and collected his troops against us. But when the men were now assembled Shakko plotted to encompass our destruction, and to take us by craft: wherefore he sent to us five hundred slaves with ewers of Um-Bilbil,\* saying, "Welcome ye sons of Arabs, and, in accordance with the custom of our tribe, partake of our hospitality seeing that ye are our guests" ! But I refused his offerings, knowing full well that he planned to attack us what time the fumes of the

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\* A strong drink made from fermenting millet (durrha).

wine had overcome my men, and they had become unconscious of their existence.

Then I sent to my ambassador Yunis who was treating with the Sultan, saying, "If you are standing do not sit down, and, if you are sitting rise with all speed and return to me". And verily, when my messengers had arrived before him they found that his head was upon the knee of the Sultan, who was giving him to eat with his own hand: then Yunis returned, but the other four, who had been with him, remained behind and were treacherously put to death. We then prepared to do battle and fought for many days until I gained the victory and killed Addu Shakko. His son Sheiga, however, continued the war and, after we had engaged each other for a space of time, he fled to Jebel Sarrago, which is a long hill about one mile in breadth, with many beetling crags and sheer precipices: and in it are patches of cultivation and waterholes, from which the natives eat and drink.

Thrice in nine days did we assault the hill and thrice were we repulsed; in one of these attacks I was wounded hard by the ankle.

Then there came to me one of the neighbouring chieftains who promised to lead us by a way of which we had no knowledge. For the space of an hour and a half we marched in a northerly direction, until we came to some exceedingly large rocks:

twice we attempted to ascend them but twice we were beaten back. Now, as it chanced, there was one very high and precipitous crag that reached almost to heaven, and I determined to climb to its summit. With fifteen followers I made my way by night to its base where I left all but five of my men, after instructing those at the bottom to open fire or ever they heard a gunshot in the morning. With the remainder I scaled this crag and lay watching over the sleeping village beneath my feet. Then came the first glimmer of dawn and, as the darkness was banished by the night, I looked and beheld the savages below, so many in number that were one to drop a pin from heaven it could not have reached the ground ere that it had alighted upon one of them. Then we attacked them from the earth below and the heights above, which instilled such terror and dismay into the savages that they fled away, thinking that there was a vast host concealed among the rocks. But we sent a messenger to them and made proclamation of safety and security.

I then reigned over the country and all the adjoining territory as far as the Bahr el Arab, making as my capital a place called Bayyu, which was afterwards known as Deim el Zubeir.

So I became king there, and the people gathered round from the neighbouring states to serve under me, until I had accumulated arms

and a strong force ; and I ruled over the land in accordance with the Book and the law of Mohammed. I then undertook the civilisation of the country, making it fit for habitation, and causing it to progress along the paths of commerce and peace.

In those days a strange malady afflicted Nur Angara, and he was fain to consult the leeches of the country: but their lotions availed him not, and there was no profit in them : so he came to me, and said, "Inform me, now, Oh Zubeir, of the remedy by which I may be healed of my affliction!" Then I had regard to his state, and answered him, "Go ! slay an elephant, and make partition of his bowels !" So Nur Angara fared forth to the chase and overcame and slew an elephant. Then he cut the beast open and began to crawl inside its carcase, keeping the flesh of the animal from pressing on to him by means of a rifle held above his head. Now when he had won his way within the beast, he came across some water of a reddish hue, warm and bitter to the taste. Whereupon the elephant began to shake violently, and Nur Angara tarried not, but hasted to depart: but, in very truth, the works of God are passing strange, and He manifesteth His power in divers ways, for, though Nur Angara had remained within the beast but a moment of time, he issued from it in the plenitude of health.

**Agreement with the Rizighat Arabs for opening  
the road to Shakka, 1866.**

After the victories that I had won, peace reigned in the land, and I determined to open up a trade route between the Bahr el Ghazal and Kordofan, because the journey by way of the Nile was so long, and beset with difficulties and dangers. In the month of March, 1866, I sent messengers with presents to the Sheikhs of the Rizighat Arabs, who were settled along the road that merchants had to pursue. Eighty of their Sheikhs came to see me, and made an agreement for opening up the road, so that caravans and merchants, whether Christian or Mohammedan, might be enabled to travel in safety. Each one took the oath fifty times on the Koran, and I fixed for them certain dues that they could extract from merchants who used that route. This caused many travellers and merchants to come to me with goods, by reason of the road being short and easy to traverse. They came even from Hodeida, Massawah, Jedda, and Tripoli, and their numbers increased, so that their gathering around me was like to the assembling of thirsty people round a fountain of clear water.

**Expedition of Billâli to the Bahr el Ghazal  
in 1869.**

In 1869—the year in which Sir Samuel Baker went to explore the Equatorial regions—a man

came to Khartoum. He was one of the people from the West Coast, who had remained on his way back from the pilgrimage to Mecca, and was called El Haj Mohammed el Billâli. (1)

He came to the Bahr el Ghazal with the intention of occupying it, and had with him a company of two hundred disciplined Sudanese, under the command of Mohammed Effendi Munib, as well as four hundred Bashi Bazuks, or irregulars, under Sanjak (2) Kutchuk Ali (3), and six hundred men of the Equatorial Police. It appeared that Billali had been to Cairo and told the Khedive that he had conquered Dar Fûr, and wished to resume possession of the mines at Hofrat el Nahas which, in those days, were considered to be in Dar Fûr. When I heard of his arrival I went to greet Billâli, whom I came upon at Meshra el Rek.

I soon discovered that Billâli and Kutchuk Ali had quarrelled, but I accommodated them with all

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(1) Mohammed el Bulâlâwi was a Fiki from Lake Fitri district which was subject to the sway of the Bulâla people, an outlying south eastern branch of the Tibus. Junker.

(2) A Turkish military term corresponding to a captain of a company.

It is really a Persian word originally meaning banner or standard, the term was then applied to the bearer of a standard, and then to a body of troops enrolled under one standard, and, lastly, the captain of such a corps. Junker, Travels in Africa I. 372.

(3) A notorious slave dealer : he was appointed to this command by Jaafar Pasha who professed a desire to abolish the traffic in slaves. See Schw. 1.70, 2.16 and 171.

things requisite in the way of food and drink and, after that I had made peace between them, we started for the west. Ere many days had passed I departed from them, and went ahead to prepare a place for them. Billâli, however, stopped at the zeriba of Ali Amûri, five days journey from Deim Zubeir, and it was here that I heard that Kutchuk Ali had died on the road, it was said a natural death, though I think myself that he was poisoned by Billâli.

As soon as Billâli had arrived at the zeriba where I had made preparations for his reception, he summoned all the heads of the neighbouring stockades, Bisselli, Aghad, Omar Agha, Abu Zeid Agha, Ghattas, Wad abu Summat and others. Now Billâli had taken possession of the arms and the merchandise of Kutchuk Ali, and announced that he was desirous of confiscating them in the name of the Government. He then asked the heads of the zeribas to give up their property to the Government, but they replied that they must first consult their partners and masters in Khartoum.

Then did certain of the merchants, in the fondness of their hearts, deliver up their goods to Billâli, but the rest hearkened not to his counsels, and asked whether I too was to be subject to his dominion. And Billâli answered them, and said that so it would be: whereupon the merchants

demanded that I should be summoned and said that as I did, so would they. Upon this I went forth to meet Billâli, but I took with me neither followers nor guns, in as much as I had no wish to disobey the orders of the Government. Thereupon I addressed the company of the merchants, saying that Billâli was an impostor, and that it was to the mines of Hofret el Nahas that he had been despatched by the Government, and not to the Bahr el Ghazal. I counselled them not to comply with Billâli's orders, save and except he showed them written instructions from Khartoum. For I was the one whom Jaafer Pasha trusted above all others, and indeed he had privily sent me a letter, saying that he would not confirm the actions of Billâli unless I approved them. (1)

Then Billâli questioned me concerning the arms, and the reason why I had neglected to bring them with me. But I replied, "By whose order and by whose command am I to deliver up these arms to you?" He rejoined, "By the orders of Jaafer Pasha, who has invested me with supreme command". Whereat I answered him, "Then, why

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(1) It is difficult not to sympathise with Zubeir in this matter. He had conquered the District and now saw an attempt being made to rob him of the fruits of his labours. Billali had absolutely no right whatever to this country, but induced the Khartoum authorities to give it to him by offering to pay a large tribute.

did you not so inform me while we were on the road together from Meshra el Rek?" Moreover, I showed him how that I had been the first to proffer him assistance, although I had been of opinion that he had given false information to the Government: I added further, that I had received instructions from Jaafar Pasha, saying that I was to succour him in every way possible in the matter of the mines. In conclusion I gave him to understand that the chiefs were under my rule, and that I would not allow him to have any direct speech with them. Upon this he proposed to confiscate the goods of Kutchuk Ali, and distribute them among the troops, but I refused, and said that this property must go to the lawful heirs. Then a long dispute ensued between us, but, in the latter end, the merchants hearkened to my spoken counsel, and we sold the goods of the dead man for forty seven cantars of ivory: this we put in a private chamber, which we sealed, until such time as the son of Kutchuk Ali should come and take it to Khartoum. At this Billâli was affected with violent vexation, and set forth for Deim el Zubeir, where I caused a separate zeriba to be built for him. I also apportioned to him and his followers fifteen hundred purses of gold, as well as clothes and copper from the mines of Hofret el Nahas.

This copper, which was worth as much as £E.15 a cantar, was of extraordinary purity, and far

surpasses that which comes from Europe: from a hundred cantars of raw copper we would extract ninety nine cantars of pure copper and one of pure gold. Indeed it was not difficult to obtain, seeing that I had with me many slaves who had been accustomed to working the mines. (1)

Now when first I went to the Western Bahr el Ghazal, I found large numbers of slaves there, and, ere many years had passed, others ran away from their masters in Kalaka, Dar Taaisha, and those parts, seeking shelter with me, among them being Zeki Tummal (2), and

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(1) "According to a recent analysis of a specimen the ore is a silicate and carbonate, not a sulphate of copper, containing 14 per cent of pure metal". Gleichen, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan I. 156.

(2) "This man afterwards rose to high rank under the Khalifa Abdullâhi by whom he was sent to attack Gedâref, which he sacked. In 1892, owing to the influence of Yacub, he fell under the displeasure of the Khalifa who summoned him to Omdurman. Here "he was seized and thrown into a small stone building the shape of a coffin, the door of which was built up. He was given no food whatever, but a small amount of water was handed to him through an aperture in the wall. For twenty-three days he suffered all the horrors of starvation, but no sound or complaint was heard to issue from that living grave. Too proud to beg, and well aware of the futility of doing so, he lingered on till the twenty-fourth day, when death carried him out of reach of his tormentors. The Saier and his warders watched through the aperture the death agonies of the wretched man, and when at length he had ceased to struggle, they hurried off to give their lord and master the joyful news. That night Zeki's body was removed to the western quarter of the City and there buried amongst a heap of old ruins with his back towards Mecca. The Khalifa, not content with having tormented him in this life, thought thus to deprive him of peace in the world to come. All true Moslems are buried facing Mecca." Slatin 356.

Abu Anga (1). But their masters could not brook the departure of their slaves, and their hearts were hardened against me, and their spirit inclined to war. But it was not my wish to quarrel with the Arabs, and I offered to give them back their slaves. Then the slaves became violently incensed, and refused to return with their masters: so I said to the Arabs that I would send the slaves with an escort as far as Hofret el Nahas: but the blacks replied that between this place and Dar Fur was a distance of many days, and rather than go back they would kill

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(1) Abu Anga befriended Slatin Pasha when the latter went to Omdurman, and was in charge of him. He captured the Omdurman fort which was being held by Faragullah Pasha, and sank the steamer Hussaniah. Latter he attacked the Nuba Jebels where his successes led to his being sent against the Abu Rôf, the Geheina tribe who had refused to come to Omdurman. He was again victorious and despatched to Gedâref as Emir with a force of 15,000 rifles, 45,000 spearmen and 800 cavalry. On the plains of Debra Sin he routed the Abyssinians. He then marched on Gondar where he expected to find great treasures, but was disappointed. "In the large and lofty stone building, said to have been erected by the Portuguese, they found one poor old Coptic priest who was thrown out of the highest story into the street below. The town was fired and looted, thousands of Abyssinian women and girls being carried off from here and the villages through which they passed on their way back, all of which were put to the sword."

"The road between Gallabat and Abu Haraz was strewn with corpses." Abu Anga died shortly after at Gallabat as the result of an over dose of a poisonous root from Dar Fertit, which he had been in the habit of taking as a remedy for indigestion. Slatin 196; 242, 254, 255, 256.

their masters or ever they reached the confines of Dar Fur. This counsel did not, however, appear good in the sight of the Arabs, so I agreed to give them a number of slaves whose value should equal that of those whom they had lost.

Then I made estimate of my slaves and exchanged them, some for one, some for two, and some for three apiece of a less valuable kind of slave, and, in this way, 5,000 slaves returned with the Arabs. From among those who refused to go back to their masters I chose 600, whom I put under the command of Rabeh: in very truth they proved themselves stalwart in the fray and well-versed in the works of war, so that, by their aid, I gained a multitude of victories. When the news of all that they had done reached the ears of their friends and relations, they too came to join me, and thus it was that I collected a force of 4000 men, who were led by their own officers and chiefs, under the supreme command of Rabeh. These men I treated well, and even luxuriously, so that they became greatly attached to me. But Billâli, when he came, tried to induce them to leave me, saying that he had been appointed to give them their freedom. Notwithstanding all that I had done for them, many were deceived by his words, so that six thousand of them allied themselves to Billâli. Now it was not my desire that I should sacrifice my friends to pleasure the whim of

Billali, and, at first, I endeavoured to propitiate him with fair gifts and soft words, but he hearkened not to my counsels, and so I determined to do what I would. I caused my horse to be saddled privily, and started with two of my most trusted followers, by name Jack and Doleib, for the zeriba of Billali, which was at no great distance from mine. I told them that I purposed inducing Billali to return to me my slaves, and, if he refused, it was my intention to kill him. I said that if I succeeded I would immediately come out, but that, if I failed, one of them was to return with all speed to my zeriba, and inform my followers of what had befallen. I went forthwith to the room of Billali, and, pulling back the curtain, found him sitting with a rosary in his fingers, telling his beads. I went towards him, and said "Inform me now, Haj Mohammed, with respect to those slaves, did they belong to your father? If not, do you choose rather to give up these slaves to me or your soul to God?" While I was thus speaking I was standing hard by the side of Billali, who shout-for his Kavass, Abd el Sid. The man straightway entered his presence, but I placed my revolver against the head of Billali, and said, "Would you rather that your brains left you or your Kavass left the room?" Whereupon the Kavass departed from between the hands of Billali, who told him to return to me all my slaves. The Kavass replied, "I

hear and obey", and the slaves were tied one to the other by a piece of cloth, and despatched on their way. As soon as this had been accomplished one of the slaves came to me and said, "Your slaves have set forth". So I left Billali, and returned to my zeriba, but, as I was upon the road, I heard the sound of firing, and learned that my slaves and those of Billali had quarrelled. I directed my steps towards the fray, and, when I had drawn near to it, Billali's men suddenly opened fire upon me. The fight was but a chance one, and, as fate decreed, no sooner had I reached the scene of the tumult than my men overcame those of Billali, who fled away, and, meeting me in their path, commenced to fire. I had with me at the time but thirty men, which was as naught in comparison with the force that was now opposed to me: some reinforcements, however, came to my rescue, so that we were enabled to drive the enemy to their homes: on that day we lost nine men but, as for the enemy, they did not make good their escape before that nineteen of their number had been overtaken by death.

Following on these events Billali and I made peace one with the other, although he wrote to the Governor General, who sent him two companies of troops and a cannon, of which, however, my friends in Khartoum gave me timely warning. Now none of

the people in those parts had ever before seen a cannon, so that when Billali fired it in the air they fondly imagined in their hearts that he must be the agent of the Government, although I knew full well that he had never received any orders appointing him Governor of the Bahr el Ghazal. Billali then counselled me to hold my peace, as did some of the elders among the people ; upon which I reasoned with myself, and, on the next day, I went to see him with two hundred of my men, and fired a volley in the air by way of shewing my love towards him. A meeting was held what time the women screamed and shouted in sign of greeting.

Now between the time when I had compelled Billali to return my slaves and the arrival of the cannon rather under a year had intervened. As soon as we had come to an agreement, one with the other, Billali announced that he purposed reducing the zeribas close at hand. So I said to him that ere he departed from me I should like to bid him farewell, and he replied that he would send his troops on ahead, and join them later in the day. But, although he promised to give me warning of his departure he refrained from doing so, and started almost immediately after his men had left. There remained of the day but two hours when news reached me that Billali had already set forth: I caused my horse to be saddled that I might follow

him, but, in very truth, the affairs of men are in the hands of God—Whose name be exalted—and not in those of man, for when I called for my horse I found that, although he seemed to one regarding him to be both strong and well, there had befallen him some strange thing by reason of which he was unable to walk. Then certain of my friends suggested to me that I should set out upon an ass, but I paid no heed to them, and thereby preserved my life. For I found afterwards that Billali had privily set an ambush of forty men upon the way, telling them to join him later at the village of Mugumungi. Had I gone out to greet him there would have been no escape for me from death, the terminator of delights ; but thanks be to God, the High the Mighty, who hath predestined all things for man.

The first zeriba that Billali attacked was that of Aghad, which was known by the name of Abu Mangura : this he easily sacked, and carried off everything that he found there : he next stormed the other camp of Aghad, which he despoiled so thoroughly as not to leave anything to the agents, except the clothes they wore. From here he went to the zeriba of the Turk Bekîr Agha, whose son he put in a sheiba, as though he had been a slave, and then to the stockade of the Jaali, Zubeir wad el Fadl : next he attacked that of Wad Ibter, a Dongolawi merchant, whom he wished to hang, but his

advisers desired him to wait until such time as he could hang him and me from the same tree. Of all these thing I was made fully aware by messengers who from time to time escaped. Thereupon Billali proposed to attack the other zeribas, but his ministers said to him that if he were to capture me all the other zeribas would surrender to him. Then Billali replied to his councillors, "God bless you", thereby indicating that their advice was found good in his sight. Now at this time Gulgulai and Shat attempted to storm one of my stockades, where there were but twenty men. My followers repulsed the attack though my cousin Abdulla fell on that day. News was brought me of this assault, and I hurried with a hundred men to the rescue. But no sooner had I relieved the garrison than I was told that Billali was about to attack my chief zeriba of Deim el Zubeir. I travelled without ceasing, and thereby accomplished in thirty six hours a journey that ordinarily requires three whole days. But I was too late, for I discovered that Billali had privily despatched some men who had set fire to the town. Nothing was left over from the havoc of the fire, but, as fate had decreed, I had hidden my ammunition in the ground, and this was unharmed by the flames. As for the place itself there was neither fosse nor rampart, with which to repel the hosts of my enemy: and, indeed,

what availed they, seeing that I had but five hundred and twenty three men ? Then news was brought me that Billali proposed to attack me in the twilight before the dawn, so I hastily divided my forces into five divisions, which were placed in the town in such a way as would most incommod the enemy. At the ninth hour of the day Billali with a force of nearly four thousand men, armed with ten dozen rounds of ammunition a man—as I discovered later from a list that came into my possession—appeared in the neighbourhood. Then my cousin came to me and said that he had seen my men and lo ! their foreheads were bedewed with perspiration by reason of the excess of fear that had overcome them : so I went to my men, and upbraided them for the fear that they endured, and I took of the sheep which were with me, and I slaughtered of them that thereby my men might eat and be heartened. Next I destroyed six cantars of ivory, that it might not be a trophy for the foe, and went to my tent with sorrow in my heart for the doom that I saw hanging over my friends and relations. I performed the ablutions, and recited the profession of my faith for what I thought would be the last time upon earth. Then I went up to a high place, from which I could see the hosts of the enemy, and one of my soldiers, who was with me, said that it was neither meet nor right to oppose the forces of the Government. So I

determined to go forth and surrender to Billali that thus I might save my friends from calamity. To God do we belong and to God shall we return in the fullness of time. Upon this I told the soldier to hold his peace, and then I went forth alone to meet the forces of my foe.

Now Billali had divided his army into three parts, as I reached a deep Khor (1), I came and, upon the right division of his troops, who immediately recognised me, and, from a height, opened fire upon me. My men, however, heard the sound of rifles, and came to my rescue, all unknown to me. They engaged the enemy, and the first to fall in the battle-rout was my cousin Idris : scarce had I heard his cry when I hasted to him, while the bullets screamed and whistled round us, as the wind screams in the time of the rains. Then, indeed, did a kind of madness possess my men, and we, who were so few, hurled ourselves upon the foe, who were so many : and no sooner had we attacked than lo ! we found ourselves in the midst of the foe, fighting with swords, revolvers, sticks, and even the palms of our hands. Then Musa wad el Haj, one of my commanders, fell on the flank of the enemy, and soon all was confusion, while Billali vainly shouted first this command and then that. In the end, finding

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(1) A watercourse usually dry except during the period of the rains.

that defeat would be his portion, Billali fled in the direction of Dar Mufio, while we released from their sheibas the prisoners whom he had brought. The next day my cousin Hamid Muzammi came to join me with eight hundred men, and was bitterly disappointed to find that he was too late to participate in the fight. There came too Rabeh, who overtook Billali at Deim Gugu, near the country of Mufio, and killed him.

On that day I was shot in the right foot and was carried back to my capital.

For a length of time I lay stretched upon my couch while the moon waxed, and waned, and waxed again. There availed not to heal me either the lotions of the medicine-men or the prayers of the priest.

And while I remained in these sad circumstances I bethought me of a sage of the sages from Dongola whose name was Ahmed El Karsani: he was of the Shaigia tribe and God-Whose perfection be extolled-had endowed him with a knowledge of herbs and the art of surgery. He straightway removed no less than fifty five splinters of bone, and proceeded to cut away most of the flesh from my leg, which was already mortifying: the small remnant of sound skin, that was left behind, he rubbed with a preparation of salt, but so acute was the pain that the world became dark before my eyes, and I swooned away, nor did I recover my senses until day had

given way before night, and night again been banished by the day. My leg was then wrapped in a kind of medicinal cloth, but became very much inflamed until its bulk resembled that of a water-melon. The rumour ran round the villages that Zubeir was sick unto death, and was soon to be admitted into the mansions of eternity. Then the dolorous wailings of the women resounded through the camp and men made moan for me as one already dead.

So I determined to appear before the people that I might prove to them that I was being healed of my disorders.

I directed my horse to be saddled and was conveyed to it upon a litter (2) but, no sooner had I put my left foot in the stirrup than the horse trembled with fear, and, at the sight of the angareeb, started to run away : I fell off heavily on to my right foot, which then burst like an orange when it is ripe, and great quantities of dark blood came forth : but, strange to say, with the issue of this unhealthy matter my leg became cured, and I found rest from my pain and tribulation.

In very truth this Ahmed El Karsani was an exceeding clever doctor. There was none who could compare with him in the knowledge and practice of his art. I remember well an occasion when one of

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(2) Angareeb, lit. native bed.

my most famous warriors had been wounded in the leg ; I sent to Khartoum in order that those most learned in surgery might be despatched ; four Egyptian doctors came and, as is their way, wished to cut the limb off, saying that otherwise death would be his meed ere the sun should set and rise again. But this counsel was not agreeable to the sufferer, and so I summoned Ahmed who had fingers as long and thin as a kurbag (1) ; with these he swiftly located the position of the bullet and, exclaiming, "in the name of God," he made one cut and lo ! the bullet was in his hand. He then wrapped the injured limb in cowdung and the leg was speedily restored to its former state.

At this time the Governor at Khartoum was Jaafar Pasha : and to him I announced my victory over Billali, the news of my success spreading all over the Sudan.

I then began to organise the kingdom that I had won, and my rule was soon known to be just, so that many persons came from different parts, seeking to serve in my army, and to trade in my country, nor was it long before I became a very great king. Theft I suppressed with an iron hand : if anything was stolen, I went to the village and demanded the thief : him I hanged, but if the thief was not

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(1) A native whip.

produced, then I put the men to the sword and carried the women into captivity. But I never offered a reward for the handing over of a thief or, otherwise, prompted by the love of gain, a man might have falsely accused another of theft.

In dealing with my subjects, I tempered justice with mercy, but I was occasionally compelled to employ harsh measures owing to the cruelty of the people of the country.

For example, when a man was sentenced to be hanged, I would tie him up by the feet, with his head hanging down, that thus he might die of hunger and thirst. But I never tortured a captive nor decapitated a prisoner. Nor did I deal in slaves as some have falsely affirmed : am I one to lead into captivity my own kith and kin ?

But, in the days of my early wanderings, I was compelled to act with great kindness towards the natives of the South : for what could I do, seeing that they were so strong, and I was then so weak ? But, in every truth, they were churlish beyond words in all that they did or said. Did I want the branch of a tree to make me a bed, then there came someone to say, "Is this your country that you should take this branch"? or, did I want a drink of water, then would I find a native lying full length across the mouth of the well who welcomed me with the same greeting, " Is this your country or your

water that you should drink it ? Give us beads !" Or again, did we want a chicken, then we had to pay for it, and in accordance with the custom of the country we would give in exchange a piece of copper of the same length as the chicken's beak.

At this time my troops were 12,000 in number: of these I stationed 8,000 at Sabunga, while the rest were distributed in divers places, in bodies of fifty, a hundred, or a hundred and fifty : thus some were put at Baia, others at Bunut, Abu Dinga (in the district that you English wrongly call the Congo) and elsewhere.

In those days I had occasion to despatch Nur Angara, with six others, to hunt elephants. For ten days they indulged in the chase, but success attended not their efforts. Then, when the tenth night was now half spent, Nur Angara met with a strange adventure, for, when he was desirous of turning over he found that he had no power to do so by reason of the excessive heat of his leg : moreover it was as though there was something pressing against it. In an extremity of fear and anguish he called to his companions that they should see what had befallen : then they gathered round and behold ! a python of hideous aspect had swallowed his leg. They were in the predicament of the lost, and knew not what to do : were they to spear the python, they might, at the same time, spear the leg,

or again, the python might crush it in its death agonies. But, as fate decreed, there was present one of the Nyam-Nyams who had one of the pipes of the country of which the length was four cubits. This he lit and puffed the smoke in the python's mouth until it gradually relinquished its hold. Then the hunters proceeded to spear the unlucky serpent, but, after they had thrust into it thirty spears, the illomened creature writhed so violently as to break them all off.

**CONQUEST OF THE NYAM-NYAM  
COUNTRY 1872.**

This kingdom which I had founded did not please Tikma, the Sultan of the Nyam-Nyams. His daughter Ranbu was still my wife, and he was wont to send her a yearly present comprising fifty cantars of ivory, two hundred skins of honey, one hundred ardebs of simsim, and one hundred slaves. But when my kingdom, so near to his, became famous he ceased to send these gifts, for he regarded me as an enemy. In the beginning of the year 1872 he despatched his uncle Marbu against me with a great army, and attacked the frontiers of my state. I sent messengers to enquire of him concerning this, and he returned them, together with three of his own emissaries, saying that he could not allow me to build up a great kingdom near his ; he added that,

unless I went back to my trade and left the country, he would fight me and take away my kingdom from me by force of arms. I replied to his messengers, "Go ! Tell your king that I will never relinquish a dominion that I have won with my sword, and that on a mere threat : if he considers me of so slight account let him bring his forces against me, those forces of which he thinks so highly because they can defeat a handful of pagan savages". Tikma, thereupon, despatched a large army, and we fought for thirteen months. And, indeed, the war lasted long, through no fault of mine, for, although the enemy had nought but spears and swords with which to fight, they made use of a system of communicating from village to village by means of signals. Now this was the system they employed : at a distance of an hour or an hour and a half's journey from one another, men were posted, and, when any one of them saw us on the march, he sounded an instrument called the Runga ; the signal was picked up and passed on by the next man, and, in this way, was transmitted to the villagers, who were thus warned of our advance long before we could reach them. The Runga itself is a large piece of wood which is hollowed out, and made in the form of an animal, such as a buffalo or elephant : it is beaten with a stick that has three strings of india rubber after the manner of an European fiddle. From this instru-

ment the villagers extract different notes, each with its individual meaning, so that by it the people can be summoned for the purpose of war, or for collecting grain or for an elephant hunt, and so on. In spite of this system of communication, we managed to engage the natives in many battles which ended in the death of the Sultan Tikma, and of his uncle Ranbu, eight of the Nyam-Nyam chieftains also surrendering to me. These had been in the habit of fighting each other continually, or rather, of hunting each other as a man would chase a fowl. As soon as I had gained dominion over them I discouraged such acts, and made them come to an agreement, one with the other. And, in very truth, I made peace to reign throughout the country so that the people began to trade and intermarry. Then the neighbouring savages heard of my justice, and of the tranquillity and ease that attended my rule, and came to me from great distances, asking me to appoint rulers over them. To such requests I acceded, so that my kingdom expanded on every side.

At this time, too, I prosecuted my trade with great vigour, and on one occasion, travelled for three months to the south and west of Deim Zubeir, on a quest for ivory. Nine days' journey to the west of the Monbutto country we came to the land of the Tikki-Tikki, a strange pygmy people, very thick-set, with long beards that would have

reached down to the ground had they not tied them up in a peculiar manner. Our force consisted of about seventy five men, and we took no provisions or food, but obtained them in exchange for beads. We first came across this dwarfish people at a place called Abu Dinga, where there was a great river (1), but we could not make them understand what we wanted. We used, however, to barter beads for ivory, although the savages did not realise for what purpose the beads were intended, and planted them in the ground, as if they had been seeds. This much we did eventually manage to understand from them, that Mohammedan traders had been there some time before ; at any rate they were presumable followers of Mohammed in as much as they were circumcised and "smelt the ground" as the pygmies put it.(2)

**CONQUEST OF DAR FUR 1873-1874.**  
**War with the Rizighat and Conquest of the**  
**Shakka country 1873.**

While I was fighting with the Nyam-Nyams, the Rizighat broke faith with me, and there descended on the road interceptors of the way, who killed the merchants and destroyed their caravans. When the war was over I sent messengers to demand an explanation from them, but their answer consisted of nothing but abuse, and they swore that they

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(1). The Welle.

(2). i. e. prayed.

would not let a single traveller pass that way ; rather would they slay him and rob him of his possessions. The Sultan of Dar Fur at that time was Ibrahim : so I sent him a letter, dated June 27, 1873, informing him of the conduct of the Rizighat and of their violation of the treaty by holding up the road.(1) I asked him to assist me against them, but the Sultan paid no heed to my request, and, as the Rizighat did not discontinue their depredations, I placed my trust in God and declared war against them. I invaded their country with my army, and the enemy collected to do battle with me. At first we made but slow progress (2) inasmuch as the enemy were all mounted on horses : in fact we did not subdue them until we had lost more than seven hundred men, a very different tale from our conquest of Dar Fur in which we lost but two Arabs and two slaves. The Rizighat had so many horses that they were like to a cloud of dust, and even if we put out a rear guard they would avoid it and attack our flank or any other unprotected part. For many days we were unable to travel for more than one hour a day, inasmuch as the Rizighat were always

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(1) Zubeir has preserved copies of all these letters which I saw at Geili.

(2) This is on the evidence of Nur Bey Angara and Mohammed Adam ; Zubeir does not admit that he had any difficulty in dealing with the Rizighat.

encircling us with their steeds and hemming us in ever closer and closer. We fought without ceasing from July 10th until August 28th, but in the end we subdued them because in the country of the Rizighat there is no water, so that the enemy were compelled to come down to the rivers in the Bahr el Ghazal; and so we caught them one day at the river Bat-ha, and took from them all that they had. Thus the Rizighat were completely routed, the Shakka country thereby passing wholly beneath my sway.

### THE STORY OF ABDULLAHI THE TAAISHI

1873.

Now the Rizighat had made use of the services of a certain Taaishi fiki (1), named Abdullahi wad Mohammed Adam Turshin, in order that he might read out in his school the names that would arrest the bullets of my firearms in war; in return they agreed to give him a cow from their cowhouses. This man was among the captives that I caught between Shakka and Dara, and I sentenced him to death. At that time I had with me twelve men learned in the teachings of the Koran, whom I had made swear on the book of the Prophet that they would give me information, whenever they saw that my decisions were not strictly in accordance with

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(1) i.e. a religious teacher.

the Mohammedan religious law. So it happened that when I directed the death of Abdullahi they told me that the law would not permit of my slaying a captive taken in war ; moreover, it was not good policy to put to death a man who was believed by the people to be so good and pious ; were I to kill him the tribes would undoubtedly consider me to be a cruel and ferocious tyrant. For these reasons I refrained from putting the man to death, and I wish to God I had not done so, for he only lived to be one of the scourges of the Sudan as will appear later.

(Here followed a history of Abdullahi who asked Zubeir if he was the Mahdi, the expected prophet of God. "Please let me know", he said "in order that I may follow you." Zubeir replied, "Behave properly as I have directed you to do ; I am nothing but the soldier of the soldiers of God, who would battle with despots and those who are disobedient to the will of God".)

After I had invaded the country of the Rizighat two of their Sheikhs, by name Munzal and Ulayyan, took shelter with Sultan Ibrahim in El Fasher. Now this man Ulayyan had formerly been my slave, and had gained great riches through trading with me. When he tried to induce the Rizighat to revolt I sent a letter dated September 8th, 1873, asking the Sultan to surrender them to me. But Ibrahim was

angry at my invasion of the Rizighat country, which he regarded as being beneath his sway. Instead of replying, he sent to Sheikh Madibbo, son of Ali, and to another of the Rizighat Arabs a letter which fell into my hands, in which he fiercely abused and reviled me. In it he wrote : "Do not imagine that I will cede this land to that rebellious pedlar ; rather am I preparing my troops in order to attack him and eject him from the country with great loss and ignominy."

On seeing this letter I wrote saying that I would not leave his country unless he made submission to the Khedive.

#### **APPOINTMENT OF ZUBEIR AS GOVERNOR OF SHAKKA AND THE BAHR EL GHAZAL.**

Meanwhile I wrote to the Governor General in Khartoum, Ismail Pasha Ayyub, informing him of what I have done and of my success over the Rizighat. In my letter I asked him to send a government representative to administer, on behalf of the Khedive, the territory I had conquered in the Bahr el Ghazal and Dar Fur. In conclusion I said that when the Governor arrived I should return to my former calling of merchant, bequeathing as a free gift to the Government all the money I had lavished on the expedition, although I should expect a suitable return, such as justice and genero-

sity should dictate. A reply came on the twenty second of November 1873, as follows :—

“We have placed your letter before His Highness the Khedive who thanks you for your loyalty, and approves of your desire to put beneath his sway the country you have conquered. He has conferred on you the rank of second class with the title of Bey. Furthermore he appoints you to administer the country on condition you pay to his treasury an annual revenue of £15,000”. I agreed to pay the tribute and formally took possession of the country in the name of the Khedive, and began to introduce into it law and order.

But Sultan Ibrahim could not brook my remaining in the Shakka country, and sent instructions to Ahmed Shatta, the chief who lived at Dara, on the southern frontier of his kingdom, and also to Saad el Nur, who was the commander on the East. He then began to collect an army with the intention of expelling me from the country. But I was aware of the movements of the two chieftains, and gave information to Ismail Pasha, who transmitted the news to Cairo. The Khedive determined to seize the opportunity for which the Government had long been waiting, since the conquest of Kordofan. He accordingly sent me 380 trained troops, as well as

three guns, to supplement my forces, and sent instructions to Ismail Pasha to fit out an expedition (1). This force numbered 3,600 men, and was composed of Turks, Sudanese and Egyptians as well as Shaigias, Bashi Bazouks and volunteers from the West ; he also added four mounted guns and rockets. This body was to advance on Dar Fur from the East, while I was to march from the South and complete the conquest. With the help of God I achieved a signal success, and I alone subdued the whole country for the Eastern army did not take the slightest part in the campaign.

When Ahmed Shatta and Saad el Nur had completed their preparations, they advanced on Shakka with a force that numbered thirty thousand men. Two battles that ended in my favour took place between his forces and mine. In the second engagement both Ahmed Shatta and Saad El Nur were killed, and their army routed. After this I advanced on Dara which I occupied and fortified strongly.

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(1). In 1873 the Egyptian Government intercepted a caravan of slaves from Darfur. In retaliation the Sultan of Darfur raided Zubeir's country and cut off his corn supplies. Zubeir determined to take action, and Egypt not wishing Zubeir to gain the credit of conquering Dar Fur, recognized him officially and decided to help him. See Gleichen 1 235-6. 256.

## FIGHT WITH SHATTAI AHMED NIMR AND THE EMIR HUSSABULLAH.

In those days Shattai Ahmed Nimr, the Chief of Bargud, collected the remnants of the army of Ahmed Shatta and besieged us in our fortress, keeping us engaged until the force which Sultan Ibrahim was preparing should arrive.

I took no action until I learnt that the reinforcements were coming. Then I ordered one of my commanders Rabeh to go out with a small detachment to attack Shattai: they were successful in killing him, together with his forces, spoiling them of all they had in the way of horses, helmets, shields and cattle. On the sixteenth of August, 1874, I sent a letter to Sultan Ibrahim calling on him to surrender: the Sultan was furious, and gathered together a huge army of over 100,000 fighting men, many of whom were mailclad horsemen or infantry armed with rifles(1). This force he placed under the command of his uncle the Emir Hassabullah with other chiefs such as Ali el Tamawi, and Ahmed Qoma, the commander of the south, who had succeeded the Vizier Ahmed Shatta: there were, too, the commander Hassan wad Abli and Ibrahim wad Dur. They arrived at Dara on the twenty fifth of August, 1874, and besieged us on all sides; then they sent me a letter in which they said "You have invaded

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(1) By 1912 these numbers had increased to 139,000 of which 60,000 were mailclad horsemen and 22,000 were armed with rifles.

our country and killed our Vizier Ahmed Shatta as well as Shattai Ahmed Nimr. Now therefore leave our territory that we may speed your departure with peace and good will."

In reply I said to them "I entered your country by force, and do not intend to leave it unless God wills it. If you have come to seek war, advance, otherwise go back to where you came from." Now as it happened their messengers chanced to see some of my Nyam Nyam soldiers, who had assembled round the corpse of a dead man and were sharing it between them, some taking the head, others the feet, others again the legs and chest which they fried over the fire, and then ate. Their hair stood on end at the sight and they took the news back together with my reply. The enemy, however, determined to fight, and pitched their camp just out of range. Skirmishes took place every day from dawn until just after midnight, my force numbering 12,000 men armed with rifles. I opened a heavy fire upon them which they returned for seven days but so many of them were killed that on the eighth day they struck their tents and settled far away where the bullets could not reach them. But they continued to besiege us day and night until our supplies were exhausted. In fact, for two whole days we were without food, and I had determined to try and cut my way out when King Ahmed came to me with intent to ransom, for ten okes of gold, his daughter, whom we had captured in the fight

with Ahmed Shatta. I had begun to question him concerning the forces of the Furs when the outlooks, whom I had posted on the top of the minaret of the Dara mosque for the purpose of keeping watch on the enemy, beckoned to me to come up to them ; I went and saw the camp of the Furs seething with excitement : so I hastened down, and said to the king, "If you will go back and find out for me what is happening in the camp of the Furs I will hand over to you your daughter without ransom". He made me swear on the Koran to that effect, and undertook in return to bring me correct news. Then he went back to his people, and said to them, "Zubeir wants 20 okes of gold for the ransom of my daughter but I only had ten." Then they said "Take these other ten okes and hasten to redeem your daughter as the army is preparing to attack the fortress on all sides to-morrow". He took possession of the okes and after dark that evening, on the thirty first of August, 1874, he brought me news. During the night the Furs drank much wine and indulged in a feast of sheep and camel meat, so I seized the precious opportunity of making a sally with 8,000 men, whom I drew up in the form of a square. When I was only a hundred metres distance from the enemy I ordered my troops to open fire on them, which they did with such effect that the bullets were showered on them like rain. They awoke in great alarm, and, seizing their arms, returned our fire, a random shot hitting me in the right arm and wounding me severely. I

paid no heed, however, but urged my men to continue their fire until the enemy fled away, leaving the ground covered with their dead, among whom were forty of the Sultan's sons. I collected all the spoils which included about two thousand shields, 2,700 tents and eight cannons, on which the name of Said Pasha was inscribed, as well as a great amount of arms and ammunition, and food which was sufficient for the army for four months. I then returned to the fortress, but Emir Hussabullah collected the remnants of the army and attacked the fort on the 8th of Sept. 1874. The fight lasted four hours, but, when the setting of the sun drew near and darkness veiled the face of the earth, he fled away with the loss of many of his following.

### **THE RAID OF SULTAN IBRAHIM ON DARA.**

When news reached Sultan Ibrahim of the rout of his uncle, the Emir Hussabullah, he was greatly moved in his heart, and summoned all his people to arms, assembling a huge army that numbered 150,000 men, and included 30,000 horsemen, as well as a large number armed with rifles, and eight pieces of cannon. So numerous was his force that one could not see his neighbour, though he were but five paces distant, owing to the dust that was created by the moving host. With intent to wage war upon us he appointed his eldest son Mohammed to rule at El Fasher, after extracting an oath from

each of the chief ministers of state to appoint his own son as his representative.

He marched on Dara, which he reached in the forenoon of the fifth day of Ramadan, 1291 (Oct. 16, 1874). Surrounding the wall on all four sides he assaulted me with all the forces at his command : and so vast were their numbers and so close their investment of the town that many guinea fowl and gazelle, and other small game, were driven into our camp, being unable to penetrate the lines of the advancing army : the tongues of the gazelle were hanging out of their mouths, shewing to what sore straits they had been reduced.

We rained fire upon the enemy, but they persisted in their attacks until one hour after sunset. The next day the battle was renewed before sunrise, and it was not until the fourth hour of the day that we drove the enemy back in headlong rout. They rested till the afternoon when they made another fierce onslaught. Our bullets mowed them down like standing corn, and they fell like sheaves from the sickle of the reaper : but the survivors stood their ground, until night fell upon the opposing forces, and the enemy retired. Great was the slaughter on that day, among the slain being some of the children of the Sultan and his nephews and cousins. That night I received a letter from Ibrahim full of the foulest abuse and vilification, swearing by Almighty God that he would not rest from his attacks upon me, until he had said the Friday

prayers in the Mosque at Dara. At five o'clock on the following morning he fired forty five shells against the wall, but I made no reply except to hurry on my preparations for the attack next day.

When dawn broke and laid before my eyes the camp of the enemy lo ! I saw it desolate and deserted. I then went out with one of my soldiers to obtain news, but found that the enemy had all run away. Nor was it a ruse on their part in as much as the men had no power to continue their assaults, but had deserted the Sultan, who followed in order to rally them and lead them to Jebel Marra, where he fortified himself. I collected what he had left behind in camp and commenced preparations for pursuit.

**THE FIRST BATTLE AT MANAWASHI,  
OCTOBER 25, 1874.**

On the twenty third of October I set out to capture Ibrahim, and found his tracks in the town of Manawashi, which lies two days to the south east of El Fasher. I came upon him at the ninth hour of the day on Saturday, the twenty fourth of October, and with him about thirty thousand troops and eight pieces of cannon. He marshalled his troops in three divisions, the flower of his army, together with his relatives and the guns, being in the centre. The sun had scarce banished the night when he opened fire with eleven shells : we did not reply but marched forward in an endeavour to penetrate to the centre. We were

then attacked by the right and left wings: for a brief space the fight waxed fast and furious, but, ere many minutes had elapsed, the enemy were dispersed in flight and fled away to the rear. At that moment the Sultan, and those with him in the centre, attacked our vanguard and succeeded in penetrating our square. The king himself was in the thick of the fray, fighting like a lion, but it was not long before he fell dead, and with him his chief fighting men, including his children and the notables of the kingdom. Thus the battle ended in a great triumph for me. I took the body of the Sultan and, wrapping it in the finest shroud, caused it to be buried in the Mosque of Manawashi with all due pomp, in honour of him and his heroes. I then interred his children and the notables who had been killed, and pardoned the captives, giving them freedom to go whithersoever they pleased. In this battle I gained eight pieces of cannon, twenty seven camel loads of ammunition, in addition to firearms and other spoil.

#### **OCCUPATION OF EL FASHER.**

After four days' rest in the country of Manawashi I entered El Fasher with all my troops on November the third, 1874 just before sunrise. Here I found that the children of the Sultan and the relations of those that had been left behind in El Fasher had all run away, only a few merchants and learned men remaining behind. To these I granted security

over their lives and possessions, treating them with every consideration. When the people heard of what had befallen the merchants, and when the news of my justice and good faith had spread, they began to come to us by night and day offering allegiance : and, ere many days had passed, all the Sultan's dependants, as well as foreigners, Arabs and Nomads, had made their submission.

#### **ARRIVAL OF ISMAIL PASHA AYYUB AT EL FASHER.**

Ismail—who was supposed to be invading Dar Fur from the East—tarried on the way, and, on his arrival at Foja, wrote me a letter which I received in Dar Fur saying "I have come to your aid, be of good heart". I replied "If you have indeed come to my assistance why this delay upon the road when the enemy is surrounding us with innumerable forces ?" He answered, "I did not order you to attack, nor did the Khedive ; if you can beat off the assaults and escape, do so, but, otherwise, you must do the best you can for yourself." He remained in Foja until the war was ended, and I was in no need of him. After I had entered El Fasher I sent him information by a messenger who met him on the way to Dara. He turned his army towards El Fasher, which he reached on the eleventh of November 1874. I accorded him full honours

and a salute of hundred guns. He congratulated me on my success and thanked me for my loyalty and the good services I had rendered.

### **CAPTURE OF THE EMIR HUSSABULLAH.**

When those of the Fur army who had been left behind realised that Sultan Ibrahim had indeed been killed at Manawashi, they chose his uncle Hussabullah in his place, and departed for Jebel Marra, where they intrenched themselves. On the arrival of Ismail Pasha at El Fasher I handed over to him the administration of the kingdom, and set out with an army of 12,000 men, including 400 trained troops and 200 horses from the Government forces. I proceeded to Jebel Marra, and, when the Emir Hussabullah saw my force, he surrendered without a fight. With him were some of Ibrahim's children, their aunt El Miram Arafa, and others of the royal family, as well as some twelve hundred of the chief men of the State. The King's wives, who were riding on horses, numbered 500, besides 80 eunuchs. I brought them all to El Fasher after a campaign that had lasted about ninety six days.

## THE EMIR HUSSABULLAH AND THE ROYAL PRISONERS ARE SENT TO CAIRO.

The Emir, after his surrender, asked me to use his influence in getting him appointed to administer the country, under the suzerainty of the Khedivial Government. He agreed to pay a yearly tribute of £100,000 and I accepted his offer, thinking that thus would the blessings of peace be assured to the people and to the Government. I submitted this proposal to the Governor and supported it with all my influence, but he refused the offer altogether ; with the result that there broke out between him and me a longstanding argument that ended in a dispute (1). The Emir Hussabullah and the Emir

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(1) The cause of the quarrel is given as follows by El Nur Bey Angara, and there can be little doubt that it was one, if not the chief, of the reasons that led to the falling out of Zubeir and Ayyub Pasha, who would, in any case, have felt rather distrustful of the former's power and influence.

“After Zubeir had defeated Sultan Ibrahim he captured from Kheir Garib, the trusted treasurer of the Sultan, a small box that contained many precious stones, emeralds, diamonds, rubies and amethysts : he also gained possession of some exceptionally large horses that Ayyub Pasha wished to obtain, as well as the jewels which Zubeir refused to give up. Zubeir and Ayyub, accordingly, had a disagreement which lasted for some time, many letters passing between the two men. When Ayyub wrote to the Khedive announcing his glorious victory over the Sultan, Zubeir thought it time to put his case before the Khedive in person, for it was he and I who had routed the Sultan, Ayyub not being within a month's journey of the scene of action.”

Mohammed el Fadl, who had succeeded the Sultan Ibrahim, and many others of the Sultan's children were sent to Cairo. I was ordered to go to Dara and remain there with all my forces, until instructions should be sent to me to go to the Bahr el Ghazal.

### **REBELLION AND DEATH OF THE EMIR BOSH.**

Only one month had elapsed, however, when a letter came to me saying that, Bosh, the brother of the Emir Hussabullah, was stirring up a rebellion and collecting the remainder of the Sultan's children, in Jebel Marra, thereby sowing the country with the seeds of mischief and unrest. I was ordered to go out to meet him and quell the rebellion. I at once complied, and arrived at Jebel Marra during the new moon of the month of Regeb (August 3, 1875). I fought him continuously for fifteen days, at the end of which time he left the hill and sought refuge in flight. Leaving my son Suliman, with 1,200 men to act for me, at Jebel Marra, I followed the fugitive until I overtook him at Saraf el Gidad near Kebkebia. I delivered a hot attack which ended in his being slain, and with him his brother Seif el Din and thirty seven of the chief of his warriors.

## INVASION OF WADAI AND RETURN FROM IT.

Next I penetrated with my army to the west, where the countries of Tama, Messalit, Gimir, and Sula surrendered to me.

From these places I came to Tuareg, which separates Dar Fûr from Wadai: here I remained some days resting from the fatigues of my expedition. My intention was to invade Wadai, and bring it beneath the sway of the Khedive. At that time the Sultan was Ali, son of the Sultan Mohammed Sherif, and to him I sent a letter calling upon him to surrender. Then I invaded his country, and advanced until I reached a place two days' journey from the Sultan's capital. Here I received a letter stating that the Sultan acknowledged the suzerainty of the Khedive, and agreed to pay a fixed yearly tribute, on condition that he was allowed to remain as King over the country. He sent one of his viziers with 50 horses and 8,000 rials in order to undertake negotiations, and pointed out that they were Mohammedans, of the Abbassid tribe, (1) but, before we had come to any settled agreement, I received a letter from Ismail Pasha containing orders from a high auth-

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(1) Compare the similar action of Amara Dunkas of Sennar who wrote to Selim Bey, Sultan of Turkey, in 1517, pointing out that he was an Arab and a Mohammedan, and should in consequence be immune from attack.

rity that I was to return with all speed from Wadai. I, accordingly, made my way back to El Fasher, much annoyed at such a termination to my conquest of Wadai. I was informed by the Governor that the Sultan of Wadai had sent his Vizier Ahmed Tunka to Egypt by way of Siwa, and had lodged a complaint with His Highness the Khedive, who ordered me to return, but at the same time conferred on me the rank of General with the title of Pasha.

Thus ended my invasion of Dar Wadai, the last of my expeditions that numbered in all over a hundred and twenty. And verily God vouchsafed me the victory in every one of them save three.

In those days Mohammed Pasha attempted to destroy me with some poison that he had obtained from Stamboul. There was a meeting at which all the merchants were present, and I the chief among them. Now those were the days before the coming of the English, when the fear of death by poison was so great that it was customary for the host to drink first when refreshments were brought. But at this time I was the first to take the coffee, and, no sooner had I swallowed it, than it was as if a hill had hit me on the back of the head. Then I repaired to my home where I lay on the lips of death for forty seven days. And, though I was saved from this untimely end the evil effects linger with me yet, and

I shall never again be strong and lusty as in the days of old, by reason of the machinations of this man (1).

### **FORTIFICATION OF EL FASHER.**

After Ismail Pasha had occupied El Fasher he set to work to make a fortified cantonment on the hill to the west of the town. First he built a square wall of brick of a thickness of three feet, each side being two hundred feet in length. In each of the four corners he erected a tower in which he put guns. Inside the wall he dug a moat fifteen feet deep, surrounding the moat with a palisade of thorn. This moat was two and a half paces broad, which was too wide for a horse with a mailclad warrior to jump. Within the wall he built offices for the Government, a house for the Governor, and barracks for the regular troops, the irregulars being stationed outside the wall. The buildings in the neighbourhood of the wall he pulled down, thus making a field of fire for a considerable distance. The result was an almost impregnable position. Next he issued a proclamation throughout the land, summoning the people to El Fasher, in order to receive pardon. Multitudes came from the four corners of the kingdom and, after receiving pardon, they returned each

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(1) This remark was made when Zubeir was over eighty years of age !

to his own country. Finally he gave instructions for the erection of a large market at El Fasher, and the natives returned to follow their wonted occupations. After the country was thus pacified he divided the kingdom into the four districts of El Fasher, Dara, Kalkul or Kebkebia, and Um Shanaga, as had been the case before the conquest. In the two districts of Dara and Kalkul he had forts built on the same lines as those of El Fasher: in each district he placed two battalions of regulars under six captains from the Shaigia irregulars, Turks, and people from the west, as well as six pieces of cannon. As for the district of Um Shanaga, owing to the fact that it was near El Obeid he only had an establishment of two companies of regulars, with two Officers, and one company of irregulars, also under the command of a captain.

#### **TAXATION OF THE PEOPLE.**

At the beginning of the year 1875, Ismail Pasha instituted a poll-tax of the people, each man paying fifty piastres, except the well-to-do who had to pay more in proportion to their means. Knowing that this tax would bear heavily on the people, and that they would not tolerate it, I suggested to the Governor that he should make the tax one of from two to five piastres, saying I was afraid

that if we taxed the people too heavily they would break away from us, as they were not accustomed to such an imposition. It happened just as I had anticipated, and it was not long before the people chose the Emir Harun, grandson of the Sultan Mohammed el Fadl, as their king, and rebelled against the Government, harassing it for a long time. But the Governor was angry at my expressing an opinion, and spoke to me in no measured terms, saying that he knew quite well what he was doing. I then wrote officially to him, reiterating my opinion and disclaiming all responsibility, which I laid on his shoulders. This letter enraged him still more, and he ordered me to go to the Bahr el Ghazal at once. I started immediately, and had only gone as far as Dara, when I received a telegram from His Highness the Khedive in Cairo ordering me not to interfere in the administration of the country. From this I gathered that the Governor had lodged a complaint with him, casting aspersions on my loyalty. It was even rumoured that I intended to become independent of the Government.

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## CHAPTER 3.

### The Prisoner.

#### **ZUBEIR'S JOURNEY TO CAIRO AND WHAT HAPPENED THERE.**

I then determined to proceed to Cairo, that I might have the honour of an interview with His Highness the Khedive, and put before him the facts of the case. I also desired to consult with him and his advisers as to the best method of administering the country that had been occupied through my efforts, as well as any territories that might in the future be brought beneath his sway. So I despatched him a telegram, and received the following reply :—

To His Excellency, Zubeir Pasha, "My thoughts and good wishes have indeed been often with you, but, owing to the distance that separated you from me, and the accounts that reached me from time to time of your arduous duties, I was afraid that you might not be able to come and see me. I was therefore delighted to receive your telegram requesting a personal interview in Cairo. Come at once, in order to discuss measures for forming an administration under your auspices. I accede to your request with much pleasure."

Now when I received this telegram I thought to myself, "if I go to Cairo I shall not return to the Sudan", (1) and so thought my followers who wished to prevent my going, but my duty to myself and to the Government constrained me to keep my word ; so I went to Cairo, travelling by way of El Obeid, Khartoum, Berber, Abu Hamed and Korosko, arriving on the tenth of June, 1875. Here I had the honour of an audience with His Highness the Khedive, in his palace at Giza. He congratulated me on my safe arrival, and invited me to stay in one of his Palaces at Abbassia with my friends and followers : he also supplied me with everything that I could want in the way of clothes and food. I had brought with me from the Sudan a thousand black soldiers armed with rifles, 100 horses of the best Arab stock, 165 kantars of ivory of the biggest and best tusks, four lions, four leopards and sixteen parrots. These I gave to the Khedive through his aide-de-camp, and received in reply a very polite letter, in which His Highness said that he was much pleased with the present.

I remained in the Palace, which was put at my entire disposal until the third of August 1875, when His Highness summoned me to Giza and ordered me, in the presence of Maher Dara Kheiri Pasha, to be

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(1) See Gessi p 333.

prepared to start for the Sudan almost immediately.

I thanked His Highness and began to make preparations, buying, at a cost of £E. 1700, two dahabiahs (1) which I loaded with merchandise and rare stuffs from Cairo, that cost me £E. 40,000.

I waited for the order to start until the nineteenth of October, 1876, when His Highness summoned me to meet him, and said, "It is my wish, Zubeir Pasha, that you remain in Cairo under the shelter of my roof until I have come to some definite decision about you." I then realised the object of my having been brought (2) to Cairo, and what I had anticipated proved true. There was naught that I could do, so I answered "Sire, I hear and obey". I went away with sadness in my heart at this turn of affairs, and I wondered at the mysterious ways of God. Then I repented of my coming to Cairo, when repentance availed me not. When war broke out, in 1877, between Russia and the Sublime Porte, I was asked to accompany the Egyptian troops, and for a period of six months I fought with the cavalry in the Black Mountains, and in the land of the Serbs and the Bulgars.

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(1) Native sailing boat.

(2) It is worthy of note that Zubeir had previously given a different explanation of the cause that induced him to go to Cairo. See Page 78.

Then there came a day on which we attacked the Russians: we fought from noon until the hour of midnight had come and gone when we gained the victory, though not without a loss on our side of 800 killed. Our commander in chief was Mohammed Ali Pasha, who was later killed by his own men because, when told to go to the relief of the garrison in Plevna, which Usman Pasha was defending, he refused to do so as soon as he heard the sound of firing, although he had no less than 60,000 men with him. On this occasion, too, he decided to turn back, saying that the Russians had cut off our retreat to Stambul, although it was we who had won the day. The troops were furious, and, as for myself, a raging anger overcame me so that I determined to approach Hussan Pasha, the son of the Khedive, on the matter. But he would lend me no assistance, saying that the war was against a civilised power and not against a horde of savages. I then went to interview the commander in chief who gave me back the same answer. So we retreated to Bazargik and, after marching the whole of one night and up to noon on the following day, we reached a place called Iskigimar. Here our anger increased for we learnt that Mohammed Pasha had received from the Russians a large sum of money inside some watermelons (1). So this was the reason why we had been compelled to retreat.

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(1) I do not vouch for the accuracy of these statements nor hold myself responsible for them.

Then came a season of the year when the sun ceased, and the rain came down as the feathers fall from an egret's nest when the Khamseen (1) blows : the rivers froze, and ice formed upon them, so that they became as the firm ground, and cannons were dragged across their surface, and we would walk upon the face of the waters as it were upon the land. And I became weak and infirm in my body by reason of the severity of the cold, and the skin wasted on my bones, so that I was in the extreme of anguish. Nor was there with me aught of those things that invigorate the heart or dilate the bosom, so that, verily, I counted myself among the people of the other world, through the violence of my sufferings. My hands indeed refused their service, and I was fain to hold the reins between my teeth, by reason of the intensity of the cold. I continued in this state for a length of time, meditating on the wondrous ways of God, and on the vicissitudes that befall and happen unto men, until destiny brought me — with the permission of God, whose name be exalted — between the hands of two Turks, whose breasts were bared to the icy winds of the Balkans. And, when they saw in what sad plight I was, they were moved with merriment, and broke into a roar of laughter, so that their sides were like to burst. They knew but little Arabic, but by means of a few flowery words, which they had learned from the Koran, they questioned me as to my state. I

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(1) The southerly wind that blows before the rains come.

answered them in all that they required of me, and when they understood that I was an Arab from the land of the sun they had compassion on me, and brought my hard case to the notice of the authorities. (1) So I returned to Egypt where I was healed of my pains and disorders and my spirit returned to me.

Now before I left Dara I put my forces under the command of my son Suliman (2), but the Government treated him so badly that he was compelled to revolt against it (3).

Certain lying hypocrites, however, in Cairo slandered me, saying that, before leaving Dara, I advised him to rebel, should the Government detain me in Egypt. They even went so far as to say that

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(1) Gessi p. 333. Zubeir lost no time, and had interviews with influential people in Constantinople, attempting intrigues, in which, however, he did not succeed.

Mohammed Adam who was with Zubeir in the fortress of Varna says that Zubeir was so annoyed at being compelled to retreat that he agitated for his recall to Cairo.

(2) He was born in 1856.

(3) Gessi p. 334. "Egypt kept a garrison . . . in the Bahr el Ghazal. The troops . . . did not molest Suliman . . . ; one day, without the least provocation, Suliman, followed by about four thousand men, fell upon the Zeriba of Deim Idris, and massacred all the garrison down to the very babes. He then devastated the vast province, putting everything to fire and sword, destroying and massacring the natives who were faithful to the Government, sacking all the Government magazines and depots of ammunition, etc."

See, however, Slatin, op cit. ch. I., where a much more reasonable explanation of the revolt of Suliman is given, and one that is far more to his credit.

I wrote to him from Cairo, urging him to revolt (1).

At that time the Governor General of the Sudan was General Gordon, who believed these calumnies against me, and ordered the confiscation of all my property in the Sudan. He even despatched General Gessi to catch Suliman : several engagements took place, so I wrote to my son counselling him to surrender, which he did, only to be treacherously put to death. (2) When Gordon came to Cairo in 1884 there was a meeting in the house of

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(1) In an extract from a letter, dated May 13th. 1878, to Suliman and said to have been written by his father occur these words "This same Idris Ebter" (the Government representative) "do you accomplish his ejection by compulsory force, threats and menaces, without personal hurt, but with absolute expulsion and deprivation from the Bahr el Ghazal, leaving no remnant of him in that region, no son and no relation" . . . The same letter advised him against Said Bey, another Government Official. When Gessi captured Deim Suliman he found a letter from Zubeir to Suliman, containing instructions to him to rid the Bahr el Ghazal of Egyptian troops, and to attack and capture Shakka ; " Sbarazzate il Bahr el Ghazal dalle truppe egiziane, attaccate e impadronitevi di Sciacca."

Zubeir denies the authenticity of these letters, which were never found, nor were they produced at the Court Martial held on him although careful search was made. Gessi could not read Arabic and it is more than possible that the whole of this correspondence (supposing it to have ever existed) was forged by Zubeir's enemies.

See Slatin ch. I.

(2) Gessi says himself p. 359 "I had Suliman and 9 ringleaders shot after an abortive attempt on their part to make my troops rise against me.

This was on 15th July 1879. Slatin p. 7.

Slatin, p. 8 says this charge was concocted against him by the Danagla who loathed the Jaali. See the account in chapter 1. of Fire and Sword in the Sudan.

Sir Evelyn Baring, there being present Nubar Pasha, the Prime Minister, the British Agent, and Sir Evelyn Wood, the Sirdar of the Egyptian Army. I questioned them as to the reasons that had led to the confiscation of my property and the death of my son, but found them convinced that I had written to Suliman advising him to rebel. I therefore said, "If this letter can be produced and it can be proved to have been written by me, then I will deliver myself into your hands that my blood may atone for that of my son : otherwise I claim compensation for my property and the murder of my son." Naturally, however, this letter could not be produced, for it only existed in the corrupt imagination of a treacherous enemy (1) : so the meeting was dissolved with nothing done.

In 1883 the Egyptian Government appointed me to collect a troop of blacks in Cairo, in order that I might go to Suakin and subjugate Osman Digna(2): so I formed the company and left for Suez, sending messengers to Osman Digna. I was then informed that I was to act under the orders of Baker Pasha, but I said, "I will either go as my own master or not at all". But the Government would not agree to my

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(1) Cromer I, 458. "This letter could not be produced at the time, but I saw a copy of it subsequently. If genuine, it afforded sufficient proof of Zubeir Pasha's complicity in his son's rebellion". see also Egypt No. 12 of 1884, p. 38-41.

(2) On reading this General Gordon wrote from Brussels, on Feb. 2nd, "Zubeir will manage to get taken prisoner and thus head the revolt."

going on these terms, so I returned to Cairo. (1) When Gordon had departed for the Sudan, in 1884, in order to effect its evacuation, he asked the Government to send me to his assistance, and to take it over after his departure, but I was told that the Anti-Slavery Society in London objected.

It was also thought that I might join my forces to those of the Mahdi but, as for the Mahdi, I do not think that he was the appointed agent of God for, though God does indubitably speak through the inspiration of His prophets, those days are long since passed away, whereas men who profess to have inherited the divine spirit come and go like geese in the time of the heat, while God alone remains unaltering and unaltered. Nor do I, for that matter, believe in dreams or the portents of the sky, which I leave to those who pretend to have cognisance of them. For what God willeth comes to pass, and there is no strength nor power save in Him. Still, perhaps, on general grounds it were wiser to believe in the Mahdi than to disbelieve, for no one can know the intentions of God, and, if the promised Christ were to come and one rejected Him, then would hell fire be one's portion.

In the year 1885 certain talebearers in Cairo slandered me, saying that there were secret communications passing between me and the Mahdi. The police surrounded my house one night and searched

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(1) It is worth while recalling the fact that in 1874 Gordon tried to employ Abu Saud, a notorious slave dealer, with most unsatisfactory results.

it, but did not find anything to support the slander, or anything that compromised me in any way. In spite of this they arrested me, although I had committed no offence and sent me to Gibraltar, where they imprisoned me for thirty months. Here I saw many strange things, and, among them, a cannon that killed a mule standing no less than three miles away (1). When they were certain of my innocence they released me and brought me back to Cairo in the year 1887. Here I remained while the years rolled on, with naught to relieve their monotony, save that in the year 1896 some of the French, who were the highest in the land, came to me secretly by night. They remained with me until two hours after midnight, trying to induce me to make an arrangement for them with Rabeh, whom they were then engaged in fighting. They offered me in return such wealth as could not be counted and the gratification of all my heart's desire.

While I was at Gibraltar I remembered my former days of honour in the Sudan, and compared them with my present humiliation in the following poem.

“Time was when with my relatives I enjoyed sweet converse, when power and dignity were mine; time was when at my call were establishments of troops, and knights swift to revenge. But time in its course has reversed all this, and imprisoned

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(1) In the June number, 1908, of the *Nineteenth Century* is a most interesting account of this period in Zubeir's life, written by the Right Hon. Lord Ribblesdale.

Zubeir in Andalusia. Oh God, who didst create the world and lay its foundations, grant speedy release ere my burden become too great for me to bear. Grant me to experience my former power, and, out of Thy bounty, Oh generous God, let it be not less than aforetime."

I said too : "Oh Night, I am not of small account, nor I am held in light respect among Christians: as for the Mohammedans my name is well known to them, and among my people too my house is conspicuous.

To the traveller and to the inhabitant my dish is not dry (1), to a neighbour or a friend am I most hospitable, and to my relatives by blood or marriage do I give liberally. I pray Thee to grant me success, O great and bountiful God, from whom all good things do obviously proceed."

Thus too sang El Hagga Bint Meseimis, a well known poetess, after I had gone to Cairo.

"At Khartoum he journeyed by the steamer: at Berber he stopped what time his followers went with coffee. They brought him camels on which he rode and set his face for the desert. To Egypt he went and said to the people 'Dastur' (1). In the land of the Christians how many were the journeyings thou didst make by steamers, or driving each morn in a

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(1) My table is always ready.

(2) "Stand at ease," i.e. he commanded respect, or, according to another explanation "with your permission" a form of greeting exchanged with a visitor on entering a strange house.

carriage ! From youth up thou wast born to command, and so they did give thee peace, fearing thy power. In the Sudan there has been none like unto thee, Oh thou mountain of pure gold, 'thou art not of brass ! As the powder of the Christians on the cap of a rifle, thou didst crush the pagans until they became softer than paper. Throughout thy life hast thou been of good repute in the countries of the people, and in the west thou didst set the foundations of progress for the inhabitants. How many were the Sultans that thou didst destroy. How many their dominions thou didst lay waste. ! Oh Zubeir, son of Rahma, the soul of all that is manly."

The Sudan has yet to produce its Shakespeare.

## CHAPTER 4.

### **ZUBEIR AND GORDON.**

For the average Englishman the interest in Zubeir's life will lie in the fact that he was so intimately bound up with the tragedy that ended in the death of General Gordon, and the abandonment of the Sudan to untold misery and starvation.

In January 1885, Gordon was sent out "to report on the military situation in the Sudan and on the measures which it may be advisable to take for the safety of the Europeans in Khartoum". The Foreign Office also gave him "wide discretionary powers", inasmuch as it had not "sufficient local knowledge".

Everyone who is familiar with this period of our national history will know that, once having reached Khartoum, Gordon felt it inconsistent with his honour, and that of the British nation, to abandon the Sudanese that he loved without taking some measures for their future protection.

To effect the evacuation of the Sudan and, at the same time, to provide some sort of permanent Government, Gordon, the arch-enemy of slavery, proposed to appoint Zubeir, the most notorious slave dealer that ever lived, as Governor-General with an annual subsidy from Egypt.

This proposal the British Government declined to entertain: Gordon refused to leave Khartoum, until the interests of those whom he would be abandoning were adequately safeguarded. Khartoum, after an historic siege that lasted 317 days, was captured by the Dervishes on the twenty sixth of January, 1885.

A few remarks on the situation created by the refusal of the British Government to comply with the request of General Gordon, their officially appointed delegate, are unavoidable when attempting to deal with the life and history of Zubeir. At the time in question Zubeir had been nine years in semi-captivity, a prisoner at large. In Egypt he had few friends, but in the Sudan he could command an enormous body of supporters that, led by him in a hundred successful fights, were prepared to follow him to death. He had been long enough in

Egypt to see its strength as compared with the Sudan, but at the same time he had also been there sufficiently long for his shrewd and calculating brain to realise its weakness, and the difficulties with which the provisional Government was embarrassed. He hated Gordon for the part he had played in the murder of his son Suliman (1), he was rankling under what he considered was the gross injustice of the confiscation of his property and the searching of his house by the Police. He was an ambitious man, intelligent, capable, who knew his strength. Finally he was a slavedealer who had to his credit the sacking of numberless villages, and the wreck of innocent hearths and homes. The blood of hundreds was on his hands. Was this the man that the morality of the British national could tolerate as its delegate ? Was it politic to

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(1) This, I believe, is the generally accepted view.

Zubeir and those of his sons with whom I have talked deny that Zubeir feels any antipathy towards Gordon. The death of Suliman they profess to attribute to the direct perfidy of Gessi and the intrigues of the Danagla. It is more than possible that they did not wish to offend my English susceptibilities, and, in any case, time must have partially healed the wound inflicted by the death of his favourite son. Still, it is at any rate worth remarking that when the Nationalist Party in Egypt began to attract a good deal of attention some few years ago, Zubeir expressed himself as sceptical of the purity and disinterestedness of their aims "like the rest of mankind", he remarked, "they are playing for their own hand ; in fact, I only once came across a man whose life was absolutely pure and unselfish, and that man was Gordon."

place a man of this record in a responsible position in the Sudan ? Might not he consolidate the scattered tribes into a homogeneous unity, and prove to Egypt a far more formidable antagonist than the poverty stricken fiki (1) of Kordofan, against whom it was proposed to send him ? He had the ability to do so, had he the inclination ? (2)

“It is a sine qua non”, wrote Gordon, that you send Zubeir” (3). That is the solution to the problem of the Sudan put forward by Gordon first after his meeting with Zubeir in Cairo, when he had a “mystic feeling” that Zubeir alone could save the Sudan : that is the oft reiterated cry, that comes week after week from the beleaguered city of Khartoum, until the narrowing circle of its enemies severed its communications with a wondering and expectant world. That was the policy that was recommended, after a brief misgiving, by Sir Evelyn Baring, and approved by those most competent to weigh its merits, Nubar Pasha and Colonel Stewart. That was the

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(1) Religious teacher.

(2) Gordon on Jan. 8 1884 in an interview with Mr. Stead as reported in the Pall Mall Gazette says, “So far from believing it impossible to make an arrangement with the Mahdi, I strongly suspect that he is a mere puppet put forward by Elias, Zubeir’s father-in-law and the largest slave owner in Obeid, and that he has assumed a religious title to give colour to his defence of the popular rights”. See Egypt 1884 No. 33 Parliamentary paper.

(3) So great was Zubeir’s influence at this time that Mohammed El Kheir, the Mahdi’s Emir at Berber, on intercepting a letter of Zubeir’s at Dongola, raised it to his head and then kissed it.

policy that the Gladstone administration declined to entertain. And here one may legitimately ask why the Government, having rejected the advice of the local authorities, made no attempt to put forward a solution on its own behalf. Surely it was the bounden duty of the Government, if they rejected the deliberate opinion of the local authorities to suggest a practicable alternative ? It is true that at the time the British Government had no desire to become embroiled in Sudan affairs, but in that case it is difficult to see why they should choose to interfere with the policy of those who were so concerned. Winston Churchill rightly remarks "that the refusal to permit his, i.e. Zubeir's, employment was tantamount to an admission that affairs in the Sudan involved the honour of England as well as the honour of Egypt. When the British people—for this was not merely the act of the Government—adopted a high moral attitude with regard to Zubeir, they bound themselves to rescue the garrisons, peaceably if possible, forcibly if necessary".

The appointment of Zubeir would admittedly have been a hazardous undertaking, but there was no alternative suggested by the Government except the negative one of evacuating the country. And this although the inevitable result must have been the abandonment of the natives to the unrestrained excesses of the slave hunters. The appointment of Zubeir

did not materially affect the question of the slave trade one way or the other, except that, with his appointment and with the setting up of adequate safeguards, the slave trade might have been limited and circumscribed. "We choose to refuse his coming up", writes Gordon, because of his antecedents in re slavetrade ; granted that we had reason, yet as we take no precautions as to the future of these lands, with respect to the slave trade, the above opposition seems absurd. I will not send up A because he will do this, but I will leave the country to B who will do exactly the same"(1). At the same time, granted that the Radical Government were to blame in not suggesting a practicable alternative to the appointment of Zubeir, there are others who should share with them what Gordon calls the "indelible disgrace of abandoning the Sudan". The Anti Slavery Society who, without taking the trouble to inform themselves of the local conditions, raised righteous hands in horror at the thought of a slave trader receiving an appointment with the sanction of the English people. The British Public whose well meaning but maudlin sentimentality approved the attitude of the Society, and lastly the Conservative leaders and papers, who were prepared to make a party question of the matter, and gain a spurious advantage from it. Had the Radical Government been convinced of the advisability of sending Zubeir they might quite well

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(1) Gordon Journals p. 211 "As for the slave trade the Mahdi will be ten times worse than Zubeir."

have been prepared to face the storm of opposition that his appointment must inevitably have evoked. But even now, when it is possible to view the question with eyes no longer blinded by the violent prejudices that warped contemporary judgment, it would be the height of boldness to affirm positively that the appointment urged by Gordon would have afforded a permanently satisfactory, or even a temporary solution of the question; the impartial critic will be prepared to hesitate before passing judgment in a matter where opinion is so divided, nor will he fall into the fallacy of arguing that because Zubeir was not appointed, therefore the Sudan was betrayed into the hands of the Dervishes and Gordon sacrificed to the Mahdi. But, on the further question of the omission on the part of the British Government to take adequate steps for the relief of the garrisons in the Sudan, and the achievement of the purpose for which Gordon was originally sent out, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion, that, having rejected the deliberately formed opinion of those best qualified to judge, the Government morally bound themselves to find an alternative solution of the question.

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## CHAPTER 5.

### CHARACTER OF ZUBEIR.

In the account that Zubeir gives of his life he appears in the rôle of a just and benevolent despot, who had no thought beyond the welfare and amelioration of the people he subdued. At the same time it must be remembered that he was a slave-dealer, and it has not been customary in the past to associate this calling either with altruistic or philanthropic motives.

From the days of Seneferu the land of the black had always been regarded as the legitimate prey of the unscrupulous slave dealer. In more modern times the great kingdoms of Sennâr and Dar Fûr had reaped no small profit from this nefarious trade; nor had Napoleon thought himself demeaned in writing to Sultan Abd el Rahman of Dar Fûr for a consignment of slaves "over sixteen years of age, strong and vigorous". But it was not until, in 1820, the conquest of the Sudan by Ismail Pasha let loose upon the unfortunate country a people with greater powers of organisation, and an unlimited supply of rifles, that the traffic in slaves assumed such vast proportions as, ultimately, to attract the indignant attention of Great Britain. Various official edicts, calculated to blind the eyes of the superficial observer, were issued from time to time

by the Turkish Government, prohibiting the buying and selling of slaves in the Sudan; but a trade that formed the basis of an official's pay, and alone enabled him in a desolate and barbarous country to obtain some of the comforts and luxuries of his far away native land, was not likely to become extinct without the intervention of a strong and a fearless ruler. In the year 1858 the Khedive visited the Sudan, and proclaimed the abolition of the slave trade, and from that time onwards the dealing in human chattels was officially prohibited. But, whatever might be the attitude that the employees of the Turkish Government assumed publicly, no real effort of any sort was taken to abolish this abominable traffic; so much so that when Sir Samuel Baker went to Kodok in 1869 he found the Governor absent on a slave collecting expedition, his plea being that this was the form that the taxes took. The extent of this nefarious trade may be realised in some degree from the writing of the travellers who visited the Sudan in those days.

According to Gessi, "The Bahr el Ghazal with Rohl, Monbutto, Macraca, and Hofret el Nahas furnish at least 80,000 slaves (1) a year". In these districts there were more than 20,000 Arabs engaged in the trade, and in Deim Suliman Gessi found bills for 90'000 thalers payable to different

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(1) Slatin Pasha says this is a gross exaggeration.

merchants, Government Officials and traders for slaves supplied. (1)

The method employed by these slavers was simple; they leased a large territory from the Government for purposes of trading, but, as they never knew when their lease would be cancelled, their one aim and object was to obtain the maximum of profit in the minimum of time.

One Ghattas, a Copt, controlled a country of 3,000 square miles, with a population of 13,000, from whom he plundered, in 1869, 8,000 head of cattle besides ivory, corn etc. (2)

Another of these traders, named Aghad, claimed the right of jurisdiction over no less than 90,000 square miles of territory. A similar area was leased by the Turkish Government to Sheikh Ahmed Agha for an annual sum of £E.3,000, in much the same way that the Roman provinces were farmed out to the highest bidder. In either case obvious and enormous abuses crept in. Originally, no doubt, a considerable profit was made by legitimate trade but, as the numbers and power of the merchants increased, while the means of resistance by the savages diminished, all pretence of lawful and honest trading was cast aside, and the

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(1) Sir Samuel Baker estimates that the number of men actually employed in the slave traffic in 1867 was 15,000.

(2) Brown 2. 140.

wretched people, powerless to combine against the hated trader, were plundered and murdered until vast tracts of country became devasted and depopulated. From white ivory to black was but a step : the latter was employed to carry the former, and what more simple than that at the end of a long journey, far from kith and kin, far from help and friendly assistance, a stranger in a strange land, he should be sold to provide a yet further profit ? Unrelenting as the desert from which they came, pitiless as the fever-haunted country to which they went, the Khartoumers, as they were afterwards called, scourged the land of the blacks, until all honest trade and peaceful cultivation was abandoned and all friendly intercourse was at an end.

But, if the method of trading was simple, the way in which the traders hoodwinked the Turkish Officials was not a whit less simple, and consisted merely in bribing, with a gift of slaves, any employee who was in any way brought into contact with the slave driver.

Zubeir in particular knew well how to propitiate the Mammon of unrighteousness, and to play upon the sensitive nerves of those whose co-operation he desired. (1) To a certain Elletofoni, a mere messenger

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(1) Zubeir himself admits he never had any trouble about procuring rifles. "Do men sleep", he asks "when there is money to be made?"

from Halfaya, he made a present of 5,000 thalers, to Abdel Kerim another 5,000, and, finally, 800 napoleons, two horses with richly caparisoned saddles to a certain Pasha H. . . . . Even the nomad sheikh, who accompanied him to Korosko, received 2000 thalers as a present (1).

By such means it was easy to introduce gunpowder and anything else that was wanted. All of these materials travelled immense distances without any opposition on the part of the Officials : on the contrary the transportation was facilitated and overlooked, as if the officers had been paid by the Government, not to prevent the introduction of war materials, but to help Zubeir. (2)

If a poor traveller or explorer came to Assuan with one gun only he was subjected to such embarrassments and difficulties that, in the greater number of cases, rather than lose time he left his gun behind with his hundred cartridges, while thousands of okes (3) of powder were subject to no prohibition (4).

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(1) Gessi p. 331.

(2) When Gessi occupied Deim Suliman he found a letter from El Obeid addressed to Suliman Bey in which was written "Your father is still in Cairo and sends you greeting. Please forward a thousand okes of powder which I will have put at your disposal. For which reasons make arrangements for collecting the powder quickly in order that the Government may not come to know of it. "

(3) An oke is about two and three quarters pound weight avoir du-pois.

(4) Gessi p. 332.

But for such tacit connivance and open assistance Zubeir could never have carried on the campaigns he undertook in the Bahr el Ghazal, or risen to such a position there that he bestrode the country like a Colossus whose overthrow the Government thought it futile to attempt.

At length, however, these slave traders became so powerful that they were able to defy the Government against which they were thus finally brought into conflict. Billali was sent and defeated as has been seen, (1) but Zubeir being still powerful the Government attempted to conciliate him, until the day came when at length they managed to induce him to go to Cairo. Then, the leader out of the way, they felt themselves strong enough to tackle the rest of the gang. Gessi was despatched against Suliman, thanks largely to the efforts of Sir Samuel Baker and General Gordon, and succeeded in defeating and killing him.

At the zenith of his power Zubeir ruled a

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(1) For the Billali episode see Slatin ch. 1.

It is difficult not to sympathise with Zubeir's attitude in this matter. He had won, by his own efforts, a vast country of which Billali attempted to deprive him by means of false representations that he made in Khartoum. Billali had no right whatsoever to this land, which he bribed the Government into giving him by offering to pay a large tribute etc. Zubeir acted with extraordinary self-restraint throughout the whole transaction, if the word of my informants, Mohammed Adam and Mohammed Kiran, is to be believed, as I think myself it is.

country that was as large as France, a country that he had won at the point of the sword, and in which he established a military despotism to enforce his orders with the sword. At Deim Zubeir, which he made the seat of his autocratic Government, he maintained a state of truly regal splendour. Though separated from the dainty dalliance that such civilisation as the mud flats of Khartoum could afford, by a thousand miles of river, by virgin forest, and by interminable marshes, Zubeir kept up in the straw huts of his capital a princely ease and luxurious comfort that many an Eastern potentate might have envied.

When Schweinfurth visited him in 1870 "Zubeir had surrounded himself with a court that was little less than regal in its details. A group of large well-built square huts, enclosed by tall hedges, composed the private residence : within these were various state apartments, before which armed sentries kept guard by day and night. Special rooms, provided with carpeted divans, were reserved as antechambers, and into these visitors were conducted by richly dressed slaves, who served them with coffee, sherbet and chibouks. The regal aspect of these halls of state was increased by the introduction of some lions, secured, as may be supposed, by sufficiently strong and massive chains.

Behind a large curtain in the innermost hut was placed the invalid couch of Zubeir.(1) Attendants were close at hand to attend to his wants, and a

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(1) He had been wounded in the fight with Billâli ; p. 47.

company of Fikis sat on the divan outside the curtain, and murmured their never-ending prayers." (1)

Naoum Bey Shoucair interviewed Zubeir in the year 1900, and gives the following description of him; "A tall man of powerful physique and swarthy hue with the features of a good-looking Arab : he has a slight moustache and small beard : his voice is penetrating and his ready tongue displays a quick wit : he has a sagacious mind and a great and haughty spirit : strong-willed and generous to an extreme. He has no false pride, and is always ready to welcome anyone who comes to greet him. By nature he is prone to good rather than to evil : an enthusiast on the subject of Islam and in the cause of Mohammed ; he is fond of learning and of the conversation of pious people versed in the Koran. But at the same time he is neither narrow-minded nor prejudiced against those of an alien religion. He leads the life of a native of the Sudan except that, when he goes out, he wears European clothes and a tarbush. A born ruler, always ready to help others."

And yet, for all his shrewdness and sagacity, and in spite of his having brought for many years into intimate daily communication with a people of a highly developed civilisation, he still retains the childish simplicity of his race, so that he attributes his present feebleness to the administration of

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(1) Sch. 2. 216.

poison some forty years ago, and attempts to cure his senility by being branded on the back (1). So too a vein of religious mysticism runs through his nature and a superstitious regard for the shibboleths of his faith : the failure to recite the evening prayers with all due formalities, and in proper order, induces an irritating wakefulness at night, and the recrudescence of his old aches and pains. At any rate so he assures me.

With this regard for the performance of the rites of his religion goes a delight in the niceties of dialectical debate, and, strange attribute in a slave-dealer, he takes almost as great pleasure in an abstract metaphysical discussion on the eternal verities as in working out the practical details for assaulting an enemy's camp.

To these qualities may be added a keen sense of humour (2), and a fecundity that is truly patriarchal. He owns to having *seventy sons* of whom he knows

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(1) On almost the last occasion on which I ever saw him he had just been fired no less than a hundred and fifty times. The treatment has this much in its favour: so acute was the resulting pain that the invalid had no opportunity for brooding on his other more serious ailments. "If firing can benefit a camel", is his argument, "then why not me?"

(2) On one occasion Zubeir had been boasting about his conquests with even less restraint than usual, and talking of the vast countries that he had brought beneath his sway. Finally I remarked to him "Well any way in spite of all your victories you never tamed the elephant or the lion!" "No," he replied "I had to leave something for you English to do!"

so little that he can only recall them on being told their mother's name.(1)

He is indeed a man of large ideas, one who deals in scores where others of a more ignoble breed are content with units. For thirty years he has had a lawsuit pending with the Egyptian Government for a million pounds, on account of the wrongful restraint of himself, the death of his son Suliman, and the confiscation of his property.

But now in the evening of his days, he is turning his eyes from such mundane considerations to the expectation of what the future may have in store for him, and is contemplating a pilgrimage to Mecca. Yet still it is his fancy to look back through the narrowing vistas of the years, with intellect a little clouded and eyes not altogether unbedimmed, upon a life of strenuous endeavour, thwarted may be sometimes, yet nevertheless brightened by many a day of successful effort and triumphant achievement. Hour after hour, while reclining upon his Divan, he will recount his perilous adventures and hairbreadth escapes with unerring accuracy, never faltering for a word or hesitating for a date. And, in the aftermath that follows so many days of stress and storm, he displays in his moments of reminiscence a keenness of intellect and vividness of memory that in view of his years is amazing.

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(1) One of his sons Idris denies the accuracy of this statement. As a matter of fact he has 49 sons and daughters now living.

Nor should we omit to mention a generosity that so typifies the East and appeals to the imagination of its peoples. With princely, though not inelegant profusion, he lavishes his wealth on many who have no immediate call upon his good nature, or reasonable excuse for appealing to his charity. To rogues and relations, and they are often both, to the passer by in the street, or to the casual acquaintance, he seldom turns a deaf ear, whether it is the remission of a debt that is desired (1) or a donation from a purse that has now, unfortunately, ceased to overflow.(2)

To few has it been given to experience so many favours or so great reversals at the hands of chanceful fortune; yet, neither intoxicated by her smiles nor depressed by her frowns, he has kept throughout his life the balance of a well-ordered mind. Not overelated by a sudden bestowal of her favours, nor dejected by their withdrawal, he remains, at the end of his variegated career, a courteous and polite old Arab, whose quiet and gentle manners would earn for him, were it not somewhat banal, the title of a perfect gentleman.

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(1) There was a man who owed Zubeir some £. 50 which he had no desire to pay. He accordingly, travelled from Omdurman to Cairo to lay his case before the Pasha. Zubeir not only remitted the debt, but entertained the debtor for a week, and paid his fare to and from Cairo.

(2) Zubeir never seems to have had the least idea of the value of money: a failing that has caused the Sudan Government no little trouble and inconvenience. Lord Ribblesdale notes the fact that he did not even trouble to bargain when purchasing a horse.

For this, crude as it may seem, is the lasting impression that is left upon all who have had the privilege of intercourse with him. A conquering Arab in a land of pagans he might have indulged his fanciful whim in a riot of cruel and heartless debauch. The heathen was the legitimate prey of the Mohammedan and his conversion, at the point of the sword, to the creed of Islam was the aim of every true follower of Mohammed, while his destruction, should he refuse the proselytising efforts of his victors, the inevitable and desirable consequence.

In a country where slavery is sanctioned both by religion and morals the ordinary relations of Arab and pagan are not to be judged by the more merciful canons that govern the rule of a civilised European people over a subject race. Impartial justice will hesitate to condemn Zubeir for not exercising a high morality of which he had never had any practical experience or conception, while it will not omit to approve the selfrestraint which he showed at the conclusion of a successful engagement. In the hour of victory he may well have stood with Clive astounded at his own moderation. No specific charges of cruelty have ever been brought against Zubeir, who, be it remembered, was a warrior and not an evangelist. That he was responsible, directly or indirectly, for the death of many innocent human creatures cannot be denied, but, at the same time, he should be judged by the standard of his time

and race, and not by that of a civilised and humanitarian British public.

How far Zubeir's aim was trade and how far empire is a question that, perhaps, may never be satisfactorily solved. For though slaves in countless numbers passed through his hands it must be admitted that, in all probability, their acquisition was but a means to an end. That is the view that Zubeir himself would like adopted, and he always and insistently denied to me that he raided slaves, a position that may have been taken up in consideration of the attitude adopted by the present Government towards this question. At any rate, while a prisoner at Gibraltar, he tried to defend the custom and practice of slavery, pointing out, quite justly, that the institution is sanctioned by the law of Mohammed, and the practice of Mohammedan countries. It might be urged in Zubeir's favour that he was led, from victory to victory, to the acquisition of large bodies of slaves, and that this was an accident inseparable from the conditions under which trade was carried on in those parts. Or again, it is possible that, though the capture of slaves was but an incidental in a larger scheme of things, he regarded their acquisition as a necessary step to the attainment of his ends. He may not, as Lord Ribblesdale remarks (1) have been a slave-dealer in

the same sense "that the chairman of the Army and Navy Stores is not a grocer or a gunmaker, or that a director of a goldmine is not a pick-and-shovel maker. But there can be little doubt that Zubeir regulated and protected and policed, and indirectly financed, the slave trade in the Equatorial Provinces; that this settlement—Deim Zubeir—was, as it were, the metropolis and the clearing house of the slave industry in that part of the world; that the considerable revenue he administered during the years of his power and rule in the Sudan was mainly levied on duties of different kinds and degree imposed upon the slave-dealers and caravans—Arab and Egyptian alike—and that his influence was due to his aptitude in systematising a common and lucrative industry. No doubt he was a large trader in other things, in ivory, gums, ostrich feathers, gold dust, precious stones, and, I think, rubber and hides to a small extent, but the pulse of the machine was the slave trade."(1)

At the same time there are many indications that trade, chiefly in ivory, was the main object at which Zubeir aimed. After his conquest of Dar Fûr, for instance, he asked to be allowed to go back to his calling of merchant; and one of the wishes he expressed in Gibraltar was to be enabled to return

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(1) Slatin Pasha, to whom I showed this passage, remarks that far too much emphasis is placed here on the slave trade, which was more an incidental of his calling than the mainspring of it.

once more to his native land and to his trade. "I am becoming an old man; and from now I only look forward to my death; but, before I die, I should like to see the country of my young days quiet and peaceful, and trade up and down the Nile. I may never go back to my own people, but, if never this comes to pass by the advice I now give, my people will bless and remember my name for good and for blessing. I do not wish to be made a great man. I shall have my reward and my blessing long after I am in my grave. If I can be of use then it is well, but let me and my family depart from Egypt and from the Sudan. We will go to one of the holy cities ... and so I will end my time."

But Zubeir was a slavedealer. Let it be admitted. So too was Mohammed Ali: so too Napolean. Only four centuries ago, when England was presumably in a far higher state of civilization than the country in which Zubeir lived, with no religious law, as in the case of Mohammedan countries, to sanction it, there was a slave-market at Bristol. In Zubeir's own lifetime there was slavery in an English speaking colony. So recently as 1870 "Every household in Upper Egypt was dependent upon slave service", and in the year 1894 an Egyptian Pasha of high rank was prosecuted for buying a slave. (1)

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(1) Sir Samuel Baker; a memoir by T. Douglas Murray and A. Silva White p. 138. and 140.

It is not just to point the finger to reprobation at Zubeir because he put to profit the spirit of the time, or followed a custom that is sanctioned by the practice and religion of every Mohammedan country. Rather should it be placed to his credit that he treated the prisoners whom he captured so well that thousands of other slaves flocked to him, to serve in his army and to be enrolled under his banner. Were it not better that they should employ their manhood in the field and in the chase, rather than that they should squander it on the vices of a city?

But though Zubeir thus engaged the slaves whom he enlisted in hunting and fighting there is no evidence that he either encouraged or allowed this army to batten on the weak and defenceless. His natural abilities made him a power to be reckoned with, in whatever part of the country he happened to be. In his case it was exceptionally true that trade followed the flag, and it is no matter for surprise if his rivals were disposed to resent his success. Far from engendering in his army a provocative spirit he seems to have behaved during the years he spent in the Bahr el Ghazal with praiseworthy selfrestraint. War, like greatness, was thrust upon him, from the time that he saved the caravanserai of Ali Amuri to the day when he laid the great Kingdom of Dar Fur at the feet of the

**Khedive.** Nor was he unworthy to bear the burden of both. That he dealt in slaves may once more be admitted : but this fact should not be allowed to obtrude itself so much into the foreground as to hide his many and excellent qualities. He may not have been a paragon of virtue but he was not an epitome of all the vices. Faults he may have had—he was but human—yet we cannot but admire the pluck that conquered, and the ability that held the vast country he brought beneath his sway.

A just discrimination, while it may disapprove of much that Zubeir did, should equally approve the omission of much that he might have done. If, in the hour of triumph, he withheld the destroying sword, and refrained from exacting the full toll of the victor, this should be put to his credit, and this should be remembered when he is brought before the bar of impartial enquiry. That the blood of so many innocent victims stains his hands was due far more to the accident of his calling, than to the fact that he deliberately set before himself the prosecution of a cruel and bloodthirsty project.

And here we may take leave of Zubeir before the tide of his influence is on the ebb, or the sun of his glory has set. An obscure Arab trader from an unknown village on the banks of the Nile he won his way through perilous undertakings and hazardous enterprises, through slave-raiding to sovereignty, from

“Obscurity to Empire” until, perhaps unwitting of the turmoil he was creating, the question of his appointment to a post to which, even in his most ambitious daydreams, he can scarcely ever have hoped to aspire, was like to have caused the downfall of a powerful British Ministry. With authority unlimited save in the opportunity to exercise it, possessed of an influence that even forty years after finds expression in the respect shewn to him by all classes, the humility of his inferiors and in the honourable regard of his betters, he languished in Cairo, until a people more powerful than he and his redeemed the Sudan from servitude, and rendered nugatory the menance of his presence in those parts. Now Pedlar, now Potentate, now King, now Captive, he typifies the changing vicissitudes of the changeless East, where the stroke of a Sultan’s pen can enrich the poorest peon in his kingdom, or impoverish the most powerful of his subjects.

If the lines that his hard life may have been expected to have carved upon his features ever existed they have long since disappeared, and, out of his shrewd and calculating eye, there seldom glances anything but a kindly and genial benevolence; nothing to indicate the indomitable and unrelenting force that once directed his actions or pointed his endeavours.

Posterity will be able to appraise more accurately the position that Zubeir is to fill in history. That he was endowed with talents for administration and organisation of a high order, that he was a mighty leader of men, born to "conquest and command", cannot be denied : that according to his lights and judged by the standard of his times, his rule was not unnecessarily hard, must be admitted. Nor will history fail to applaud his rare self-restraint and noble equanimity "tried by both extremes of fortune, and never disturbed by either". Like the great Hyder Ali, who founded the Mohammedan dynasty of Mysore, the adventurer became a general, the poor man a prince. Like him, too "in extreme old age his spirit remained as high, and his intellect as clear as in the prime of manhood."

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NOTE A.

**NUR BEY ANGARA.**

Nûr Bey Angara, of the Danagla tribe, was born about the year 1836. He was brought up by the Melek Tumbal and claimed descent from the Shaigia kings. At an early age he enlisted in the Cavalry, but, on the return of the expedition from Abyssinia, in 1862, he and twenty four others were dismissed by Musa Pasha, who wanted their horses to drag his cannon, according to Nur's account. He then threw in his lot with Zubeir, and served him in the capacity of cook, until his fighting abilities induced his master to give him the command of some of his troops. He was present with Zubeir in most of his early triumphs and afterwards joined Suliman. When Gordon went to investigate the complaints that were being brought against Suliman, he appointed Nur Governor of Sirga and Arebu in Western Dar Fur, where he defeated and killed Sultan Harun, in the year 1880. When the Mahdi rose, he fought against him and was besieged in Ashaf, in Kordofan : he was forced to retire on Bara, where he finally submitted to Wad Nejumi. He then joined the forces of the Mahdi, and fought under Abu Anga. On the nineteenth of January, 1885, he was sent with a thousand

riflemen by the Mahdi to join Musa wad Helu, but arrived at Metemma on the day when the battle of Abu Tleh was fought. With Slatin Pasha he was instrumental in saving the life of Neufeld when the latter was brought a captive to Omdurman. Slatin, p. 104, says of him that "he was a most resolute villain : without rhyme or reason, and often merely to satisfy his own brutal pleasure, he shed blood, and, as for his views in regard to the property of his fellow creatures, they are beyond the conception of the most advanced Social Democrat in the world"; "A tall, beardless man, with a dark copper coloured complexion, and the usual three slits in his cheeks, he has an energetic and a wild look, but, when talking, he appeared to be a perfectly harmless individual".

He was notorious for his cruelty. In Dar Fur it was one of his pleasant customs to cut open the dead bodies of his enemies, and, after extracting their kidneys, to mix them with salt and eat them. He finally abandoned this little habit on being warned by Zubeir that he would be put to death if he continued the practice.

At the present moment he is alive in Omdurman where he devotes most of his time to drinking.

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NOTE B.

**ORGANISATION OF THE SUDAN AS PROPOSED  
BY GENERAL GORDON.**

1. His Excellency, Zubeir Pasha, shall be the Governor, (or Ruler) of the Sudan, he shall have the rank of Ferik and the Osmanieh decoration. His pay shall be £E. 6.000 per annum, i.e., £E.500 per month.

2. He shall be free to appoint and discharge the Mudirs and Wakils, and all other officials and employees of his own motion, and make regulations for the employees necessary for the administrative and military work in every region, in each Mudirieh and in the central town, and for the finances and arsenal, etc. and also regulations fixing the taxes and all the revenues and the expenses needed yearly.

3. He is permitted to give military and civil grades up to the grade of Miralai, and shall refer to the Khedive's cabinet in Cairo asking for the brevets (or commissions), but above that grade he must refer to the Khedive of Egypt.

4. .... The regions of Fashoda, the Equator and Bahr el Ghazal shall be left (or abandoned) and the employees withdrawn from them.

12. His Excellency El Zubeir Pasha shall undertake to capture Mohammed Ahmed, the would-be Mahdi, and bring the captives that are with him, both Europeans and others, for the execution of which His said Excellency shall receive £E.30,000.

13. Trade in slaves shall be stopped.

APR 12 1915

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**BY THE SAME WRITER.**

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**TOOTH OF FIRE,** Being some account of the ancient  
Kingdom of Sennâr. Oxford, B.H. Blackwell, Broad  
Street, London. Simpkin, Marshall & Co. Limited.

**THE YACUBABI FAMILY,** A note on one of the  
Gezîra tribes of the Sudan. The Sudan Printing Press,  
Khartoum.







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